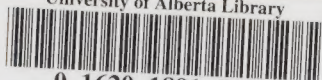


University of Alberta Library



0 1620 1891 5643



PONOKA

1904

1954

50th

anniversary





EX LIBRIS
UNIVERSITATIS
ALBERTENSIS

Prairie Provinces Collection

THE PONOKA BOOK

PUBLISHED AS A TRIBUTE TO THE
PIONEERS WHO OPENED UP THE
DISTRICT AND TO COMMEMORATE
THE TOWN'S

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
1904 - 1954

Occasionally, nowadays, we hear a note of pity for the pioneers. Forget it! They don't need pity and never did. Never heard one that complained of hardships. True—money was hard to get, but when we did get a dollar, we could keep all of it, and buy something with it. Horses died with swamp fever. Mosquitoes were in black clouds. Trails were treacherous. But what more exciting experience could one crave than having a part in opening up a brand new rich empire?

—From remarks by pioneer Wallace Archibald at opening of Crestomere School, December 11, 1953.

CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| The First White Man | 4 |
| The Indians | 5 |
| The Calgary - Edmonton Trail | 10 |
| The Missionaries | 12 |
| The Traders | 14 |
| Rebellion | 15 |
| Here Comes The Railroad | 26 |
| Agriculture And Progress | 29 |
| The Ponoka District | 37 |
| Pioneers | 69 |
| Ponoka's Churches | 81 |
| Provincial Mental Hospital | 85 |
| Clubs And Lodges | 87 |
| Coming Of The Pests | 92 |

Introduction

IN this year of 1954, Ponoka celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. Just a half century ago, the pioneer settlers, who had chosen this fertile area near the Battle River as their home, saw their first dreams of progress come true when the village was officially incorporated as the Town of Ponoka. And now we can look back over those harsh, back-breaking wonderful years to see just how far Ponoka has come on the long trail of progress.

The fifty-year-old Town of Ponoka today is a modern, bustling centre of activity for one of the richest farming areas in Alberta. Every day dozens of trucks stop to unload their supplies, buses carry their passengers to and from the depot, and the ever-busy trains provide a quick and vital link with our neighbours to the north and south. Our rural friends, living in the many farms, settlements and villages within Ponoka's trading area, know that here is a town that can offer all the services and entertainment necessary in a modern world. There is much to be said about the Ponoka of today and—in the field of history—there is much to be said about the Ponoka of fifty years ago.

But the real story of Ponoka did not start in 1904. And it didn't—as many people think—start with the arrival of the railroad on July 2th, 1891, at a point then known simply as "Siding No. 14." No, by that time much history had been seen by the placid Battle River. Famous explorers and missionaries, nondescript courier de bois, stealthful Indian war parties, patient fur traders—all these had already played their roles in the history of Ponoka. In this booklet we want to tell you the whole story, from the days of the noble Indian to that memorable time fifty years ago when Ponoka became a town.

The First White Man

The Battle River—a long meandering stream which has its source at Battle Lake—wanders across more than half the width of Alberta and into the neighboring province of Saskatchewan before it flows at last into the mighty North Saskatchewan. In places, the narrow stream winds through dense parklands where the lush green foliage crowds to the very edge of the peaceful waters. Farther east, it slices a deep path through the fertile prairies, providing the spectacle of a river which over the countless centuries has whittled away the soft soil in its never-ending voyage.

* * * *



On the third day of April, 1800, David Thompson, explorer and trader for the North West Company, stood on the banks of the Battle River at a point less than one mile west of the modern Town of Ponoka. This was the first white man—and a famous one he was—to make an actual record of visiting the area.

He had left the trading post of Fort Augustus (across the river from the present day Fort Saskatchewan) on March 31st en route to Rocky Mountain House. He followed an old Indian trading trail, known by the unexplained title of "The Wolf's Track" south past the Bear Hills, and camped on April 2nd at the Battle River Leavings. The next morning he recorded travelling "nine miles south by southwest" before crossing the stream. A short distance south he crossed Wolf Creek and turned westward while the Indian trail continues south towards what Thompson called the "Wolf Track meadows."

It is fitting that a man with the courage and foresight of David Thompson should be the first white man known to visit the area. He was a man whose greatest desire was to learn what lay beyond the next ridge and when he found out, he wanted to mark it accurately on his map so that all the world would know. Thompson did many exciting and memorable deeds in his lifetime. He discovered the famous Athabasca Pass which for many generations was the main trade route over the Rocky Mountains. He discovered the headwaters of the Columbia and Thompson Rivers and had the latter river named after him. He built numerous fur trading posts in British Columbia, Idaho and Washington, and is credited with preparing the first accurate map of the Canadian West.

It was a little more than ten years later when another white man wrote in his journals that he had also seen the Battle River. This was Alexander Henry, a fur trader for the North West Company who also was travelling to Rocky Mountain House. At noon, October 1st, 1810, he reached the Battle River Leavings, near Menaik, crossed over a small swampy plain and followed the same trail that Thompson had used. "We fell upon a large road coming from below and proceeding southwards," wrote the fur trader. "This we supposed must have been made by the whole tribe of Sarcees, whom we had desired to go above and winter about the Rocky Mountain House, in hopes of killing more beaver than elsewhere. They appeared to have followed the old route, which presents a well-beaten track as broad as a wagon road."

"We soon after," continued Henry, "crossed Battle River on a ridge of

stones where there was but little water. Beaver appear to be very numerous in this river; vestiges are seen every moment. We proceeded to another small river (Wolf Creek) where beaver appear to be in a very advantageous situation for setting traps." Being a fur trader, Henry's main interest naturally centred upon anything pertaining to his business so he and his party paused long enough to catch at least one beaver. From there, the explorer turned west towards Rocky Mountain House.

Many other white men—the illiterate French-Canadian *courier de bois*, the seasoned Scottish employees, and many others—also were probable travellers along this trail in the early 1800's, for it appears to have been the main route between trading posts. And "The Wolf's Track" apparently lost none of its popularity over the passing years, as it was recorded by that name by Captain John Palliser during his explorations of 1857-60.



Millions of buffalo once roamed throughout the countryside around Ponoka. It was a favorite hunting ground of the Crees since time immemorial. When the white man's guns decimated the one animal that was food, shelter and clothing to the plain's Indians, the tribes suffered hunger often approaching starvation. It is probably one of the factors fomenting the state of unrest which led to the Riel rebellion in 1885.

The Indians



So far back as the pages of white man's history carry a record of the Canadian West, the Indians have been its first inhabitants. It was the Indians whom Anthony Henday wanted to see in 1754 when he became the first white man to enter what is now the Province of Alberta. And it was to reap the rich harvest of furs from the lands of the Indian that prompted the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies to penetrate into the unknown West during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Who were the first Indians to dwell near the wooded banks of the Battle River? There is no way of knowing, for to find such an answer an historian would have to go back many hundreds—even thousands—of years. Some of the people from Asia who migrated across the Bering Straits doubtless found their way into Alberta. They followed an old trail which over the centuries became the great migration route through North and Central America.

The first definite record of the tribes inhabiting the Battle River country comes in the 1730's when the Shoshoni or Snake Indians were said to control



the area, with the Blackfeet living to the north-east in Saskatchewan, and the Crees dwelling beyond them.

During the next few years the Peigan branch of the Blackfeet nation was successful in obtaining guns, bartered through the Crees from traders on Hudson's Bay. With these fearful new weapons they drove the Snake Indians southward and by 1781 the Blackfeet were in possession of the lands lying between the North Saskatchewan and Red Deer Rivers. Within another seven years, the Snakes were struck down by smallpox and the victorious Blackfeet forced their enemies south of the Bow River. By 1800 the Snakes had fled across the mountains and today the descendants of these Indians live on reserves in southern Idaho and Nevada.

The Blackfeet remained in possession of the Battle River country for many years. In 1808, Alexander Henry said these Indians controlled all the land between the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers, while the Crees were to the north and east, and the Stonies were in the Pembina River area.

"The principal occupation of the (Blackfeet) is war," commented Henry, "and like all other savages they are excessively cruel to their enemies. The country they inhabit abounds with animals of various kinds; beaver are numerous, but they will not hunt."

That fairly well summarized the life of the carefree Blackfeet of that early date. They were content to kill the buffalo for food, clothing and implements, and to declare unrestricted war on any tribes daring to encroach upon their newly-won lands. The teeming buffalo roamed by the millions through the Battle River area and south onto the prairies, so that a hunter did not have to venture far from camp to kill a plentiful supply of meat.

In the early years of the 1800's, the Blackfeet began their slow exodus from the parklands of Alberta, preferring the open prairies to the south. They soon controlled the plains south to the Missouri in Montana, and by the 1830's they had all but abandoned the Battle River area to the Crees. The latter nation was glad to take over this land of rolling hills and forests, for they had learned the value of trapping beaver and at that time there were no better streams than those which flowed into the winding Battle River.

Of the original four chiefs, who settled at the Hobbema Agency after the treaty of 1877, two of them—Bobtail and Ermineskin—were brothers, while

Muddy Bull was a close relative. The fourth chief—Samson—had a separate band.

In the years previous to 1869-70, the bands under Bobtail, Ermineskin and Samson had two main purposes in life—to keep close to the buffalo and far from the Blackfeet. To do this, they wandered over much of Alberta and even into British Columbia, Montana and Saskatchewan. They generally wintered in the Kootenay Plains, west of Nordegg, but sometimes wandered down to the Bow River, Pincher Creek and into the Flathead country of Montana.

In the spring, the bands usually moved out to the edge of the plains—the Blackfeet country—and killed buffalo in the upper Bow River region and eastward near Three Hills and Hard Hills. From there they wandered northward to Buffalo Lake and sometimes over to Battleford, in Saskatchewan, where they mingled with neighboring bands of Crees. By summer the Crees usually ended up in the valley of the North Saskatchewan River, south of St. Paul, and in the fall they traded at Fort Edmonton before circling southwest towards the foothills again.

The bands were camped near the North Saskatchewan in the Two Hills area during the summer of 1870 when the great smallpox epidemic struck. The bands were hopelessly struck down when the disease entered their camps. Dozens of dead were left behind as they fled up the Saskatchewan, traded at Fort Edmonton what little furs and robes they still possessed, and took refuge in the Bear Hills, west of Hobbema. The rolling country with its plentiful supplies of elk and deer was a pleasant haven for the disease-ravaged bands. The plains with their buffalo herds were only a day's journey away, yet the Blackfeet seldom ventured that far west of their main trail to Fort Edmonton.

The Stonies who lived in the district remained, camping generally near Pigeon Lake or farther south at Wolf Creek. The Stony bands were under the chieftainship of Che-poos-ste-quah or Sharphead, who had been a peaceful man and a friend of the Methodist missionaries. Although allied to the Crees the Stonies never became close friends with the Bear Hills' bands, even in the years following their adhesion to treaty.

The bands from the Bear Hills were not on hand for the treaty ceremonies at Fort Edmonton in 1876, but travelled to Blackfoot Crossing in the fall of 1877 when they heard that the government was signing another treaty with the Blackfeet, Sarcees and Stonies. After completion of the Blackfeet Treaty, Hon. David Laird, Governor of the North-West Territories (then including all of Western Canada), accepted the Crees in a separate ceremony. On September 25th, 1877, Kis-kay-im or Bobtail signed as the head chief, while Mem-in-orou-taw and Teho-wek as minor chiefs for the band of 432 Indians. In the council, Bobtail asked for, and received, a reserve extending from the ridge of Bear Hills southeast to the Battle River.

Following the treaty payments, the bands wintered in the foothills and returned to their new reserve in 1878. Then, in the words of the old warriors, "began the years of hardship and privation"—years which lasted up to and beyond the Riel Rebellion. The buffalo failed to return in great numbers, but were hemmed in and slaughtered on the northern Montana plains by American hide hunters and the Blackfeet. The government had not made complete arrangements for the adequate issue of rations, so the Crees killed what little game was left in the area and began to starve.

In the summer of 1881, the band under the leadership of Ermineskin hunted throughout the Hand Hills area, but succeeded in killing only one old bull. And when the Stonies returned from the prairies, the wife and children of Sharphead were so weakened by starvation they could not stand on their feet.

Over the passing months, the situation became so bad that a missionary

priest was induced to write a plea to the Minister of the Interior, in Ottawa, begging for assistance. Written on January 7th, 1883, the petition complained of "dire poverty, our utter destitution during the severe winter when ourselves, our wives and our children are smarting under the pangs of cold and hunger. We are reduced to the lowest stage of poverty. We were once a proud and independent people and now we are mendicants at the door of every white man in the country; and were it not for the charity of the white settlers we would all die. Our widows and old people are getting the barest pittance, just enough to keep body and soul together. What are we then to do?"

Their plight improved in the spring of 1883 and later in the year when the reserves were officially surveyed, the Crees under the able guidance of Sam B. Lucas, farm instructor, began to till the land and to plant small gardens. When the survey was made, Bobtail asked for his band to be settled near the Leavings of the Battle River where he and his son, Coyote, had built a house. Samson and Ermineskin were given reserves in the Bear Hills and on the flats to the east, while Muddy Bull settled his band at Pigeon Lake, near Sharphead's band of Stonies.

In 1883, the fisheries failed and the two bands at Pigeon Lake again faced the threat of starvation, so Muddy Bull was induced to take a reserve at the north end of the Bear Hills, and Sharphead was asked to take land adjoining that of the Crees. However, after a few weeks it became evident that the Stonies and Crees would never get along at close quarters, so a new site for the Stonies was chosen at the confluence of Wolf Creek and the Battle River—beginning about two miles west of the present Town of Ponoka.

This band of Stonies had an unfortunate history. First, they were crowded out of their hunting grounds near Pigeon Lake by the Crees in 1870. Then, in 1885, they were given a bad reputation through the actions of young Cree warriors who attacked the mission on their reserve. A year later, a measles epidemic carried off the major part of the small band, and in 1889 and 1890, the grip and influenza reduced the weak and broken band to a mere handful. Finally, in November of 1890, the Indian Commissioner could see no reason to continue paying a staff of men at Wolf Creek, so under his orders the government farm there was abolished. During the winter, the agent reported the survivors were "out on their own," but by the following spring most of them had joined a band of Stonies under Chief Paul at



Taken in 1889, this picture shows a typical camp of Cree Indians. Note straw headgear on men. Between the teepees, meat is hanging on poles to dry and smoke over a slow fire.

Lake Wabamun. After the arrival of settlers in the district, the Indian lands were sold, and today no signs of this unfortunate epic can be found in the district.

In 1896, the American Government decided that the Crees who had fled to Montana during the Riel Rebellion had no right to remain in their country so armed cavalry units swept all across the northern part of the state and loaded hundreds of the refugees into waiting trains. When these Indians were released at Coutts and Lethbridge, they scattered like chaff in the wind—many heading back to Montana, some going to Saskatchewan, and others coming to the Battle River area. About 150 of these Crees found their way to Bobtail's vacated reserve.

Today, the Indians of the Hobbema agency are good neighbors to the people of Ponoka. Much of their business is transacted in the town and their trucks, wagons and buckboards have become familiar sights on Ponoka's streets. Many of these Indians are successful farmers; others trap profitably west of the reserve; while still others turn to cutting poles and posts from the timber supply on their reserve.

But the time when everyone sees the Hobbema Indians at their best is during the Ponoka Stampede. It is then these proud people don their traditional attire of the buffalo hunting era, and for a few days they remind us all that not too many years ago this land was all theirs.



Ponoka Post Office

The first post office between Red Deer and Edmonton was at Holbrook on the James Aylwin farm, located west of Menaik.

In Ponoka the first postal service was from Algar's store with Mr. F. E. Algar, postmaster. Later a separate post office was operated in the small building west of the store.

After a disastrous fire the next site chosen was across the road where the Pay-N-Take now stands. It occupied 600 square feet and had 200 odd boxes.

The present post office was built in 1951 with 3,600 square feet of working space and 1,000 boxes. The staff has increased from two to five.

Mr. George Gordon became postmaster in 1914. Mr. C. W. Healing joined as assistant 33 years ago and with one other clerk ran the office for Mr. Gordon. He became postmaster in 1946 on Mr. Gordon's retirement.

Mail used to be delivered to sub-postoffices at Chesterwold, Ferrybank, Home Glen, Wood River, and Usona, but these have all been closed. Five rural routes now serve the district with two couriers, Mr. H. Lucas and Mr. P. Delong. For many years Mr. B. E. Kyler has carried mail to and from the train.



Ponoka Playgrounds

The first playground was operated on the school grounds in the summer of 1943, under the auspices of the Ponoka Home and School Association. Mrs. A. Moore and Mrs. A. Nicholas were in charge. The central playground was formally opened in 1950. It has a wading pool and various equipment. The Riverside playground was opened in 1953, and a playground for Lucas Heights is now in preparation.

The Calgary-Edmonton Trail



THE true Calgary-Edmonton trail, as we know it today, was made in 1875—the same year that Fort Calgary was established by the North-West Mounted Police.

The main credit for opening the trail should go to Rev. John McDougall and his brother David, who cut out the northern half of the route in 1873, when making a cart road from Fort Edmonton to Morley. This route was roughly the same as the old fur trail made by the North West Company in 1803 between Fort Augustus and Old Bow Fort. It followed an old Indian trail past the Bear Hills, across the Battle River at Ponoka, over the Red Deer River west of the present city, and turned south-west at Olds to travel in almost a straight line to Morley. After the establishment of Fort Calgary, this route branched at Olds and went directly south to Nose Creek and on down to the new police post.

By 1881, the trail had developed to the point where local citizens began demanding mail service and to back up their claim, the population along the line was cited. From Fort Edmonton to Red Deer River it was described as follows: "Peace Hills Indian farm (Wetaskiwin)—10 whites and 50 half-breeds. Battle River station (Ponoka)—three whites and 300 Indians. Red Deer Crossing—no population." That was one period in history when Ponoka's white population surpassed that of Red Deer's by 300 percent!

The first mail service between Calgary and Edmonton started in July 1883, with Ad McPherson and John Coleman obtaining the contract. They made regular fortnightly trips between the two points, carrying light freight, Royal Mail and passengers. Heavy freight was still handled by the company's wagon trains. The first stage-coach passenger service was started in the following month by D. McLeod of Fort Edmonton, who announced that a weekly stage would make the 200-mile journey in five days, stopping at Peace Hills, Battle River, Red Deer River, and other points along the line.

In January, 1885, a crew of men was sent out from Fort Edmonton to build a bridge across the Battle River about a mile and a half downstream from the old ford. Located on Section 4, Township 43, Range 25, the bridge was completed on January 10th. It measured about forty feet long and was complete with piers and stone-fortified approaches. The bridge necessitated a change in route for the trail—the new road swerving east about four miles south of the river and rejoining the old trail six miles beyond the ford.

The first survey of the Calgary-Edmonton trail was made during the summer of 1886, with C. A. Bigger laying out the route from Red Deer River to Calgary and George P. Roy surveying the portion north to Edmonton.

Surveyor Roy must have been something of a prophet who could see into the future—if the comments made in his report are any criterion. In those pioneer days of wagons and stage-coaches, he predicted great things for the route, and all have come true. The most interesting of these was his statement about the general selection of a roadway.

"In view of the great traffic and immense travel which some day may be done this way," he said, "my intention was to make the road as straight as the actual direction of the trail between the two extreme points, Red Deer and Edmonton, would allow."

And straight it was. Over small hillocks, through corduroyed muskegs and across small streams the surveyor laid the track, yet always making sure that it would be easily passable. "A little ditching, a small culvert, a slight cut, or a few branches thrown on a soft spot" were all that was needed in most cases, according to Roy, to make the road passable at all times.

Upon completion of his work, the surveyor made another remarkable



The springless, creaking covered wagon was the normal mode of travel along the Calgary-Edmonton trail. This 16-wagon train has left Calgary and is heading for Edmonton. Along the way it stopped at Fort Ostell, where there was plenty of water, wood for fires, and three small stores. The wagons forded the river just west of the place where highway No. 2 crosses it today.

prediction about the maintenance of the road. "After settlement," he stated "farmers will improve the road to satisfy the public." This, indeed, became a fact at the turn of the century, when the incoming swarms of land seekers churned the trail into an almost impassable quagmire. In 1901, the government land guide, stationed at Ponoka, reflected upon these difficulties and remarked that "the farmers in this locality have voluntarily doubled the road tax upon themselves." Even today, in an indirect sense, the farmers "improve the road to satisfy the public," for anytime that repairs are needed, the rural population is always among the first to get something accomplished.

Throughout the survey from Red Deer to Edmonton, Roy reported the country was devoid of settlers, except for one man north of Battle River. This was James Aylwin, who, after leaving the employ of the Indian Department in 1880, took out a homestead near the present Menaik.

After the tracks of the Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company reached Fort Edmonton on July 15th, 1891, the old trail lost much of its popularity. However, the rail freight rates were high and by the autumn of the same year the Edmonton Bulletin made this interesting comment:

"The old trail is not nearly as deserted as might have been expected. From Red Deer south a great deal of freight is being hauled by wagons, as it can be done more cheaply than by train. North of Red Deer, Elliott and McCue of Wolf Creek, and W. Macdonald of Bear Hills plain are bringing in freight by wagon."

During its 80 years of history, the Calgary-Edmonton trail has progressed from a crude pathway in an unexplored wilderness to a strategic highway in a modern civilization.

The Missionaries



BEFORE the Crees and Stonies settled on their reserves near Ponoka, most of the missionary work had been carried on from points outside the Battle River area. The Crees had asked for a priest in 1841 and received regular visits from Father Thibeault and later from the beloved Father Albert Lacombe. These and other early Oblate missionaries came from St. Albert and Lac Ste. Anne to spend a few days in the nomadic camps whenever the Indians happened to be in their territory.

The Protestant adherents first had the services of Methodist missionary Robert T. Rundle, who came to Fort Edmonton in 1840. Following him was Rev. Thomas Woolsey, who also worked out of the Edmonton post. The first attempt to establish a mission near the district of the Bear Hills people occurred in the 1860's, when Revs. George and John MacDougall built a mission at Pigeon Lake, where the bands of Sharphead, Samson and Muddy Bull came for spiritual attention.

Soon after the Crees and Stonies settled on their respective reserves, the religious groups made plans to locate missions in the district. As in the case of sending the first missionary to Alberta, the Methodist Church made the initial move. In May, 1881, Rev. Erven B. Glass, B.A., was selected to establish a mission on the Battle River.

Born in Ontario, Rev. Glass first became a school teacher and travelled west in 1880 with a missionary party. He remained at Fort Edmonton for the winter of 1880-81, then moved to the Battle River to establish his mission. While serving at this post, four miles east of Menaik, as well as at other missions in Alberta, Rev. Glass assisted in translating the Methodist Hymn Book into Cree syllabics, and prepared a grammar: "Primer and Language Lessons in English and Cree." Doubtless, he was the first author and intellectual in the Ponoka area. Rev. Glass died in March, 1929.

The establishment of a mission on the Samson Reserve was no simple task, and Rev. Glass described it graphically in his own words:

"In May, 1881, my wife and I left Edmonton, travelling sixty miles south to establish a mission at Battle River. Reaching the site selected by Rev. John MacDougall and myself in April, I pitched my tent, broke two acres of prairie, put in potatoes and turnips, and held services with the Indians.

"The next task was to erect a mission house. For men and provisions, of which there was but a limited supply in the country, I started for Edmonton, returning with two half-breeds and short rations. With this reinforcement, I led the way to the pinery three-quarters of a mile away from the proposed site. In two weeks timber was felled, scored and hewed for a house 19 by 25 feet, rafters and sills were prepared, 800 feet of lumber sawn, and the cellar dug.

"The hired axmen then left, while I remained to skid the timber in the vicinity of the woods and then haul it with my own team onto the site." The solitary toiler's early experience in the backwoods of Ontario was now of eminent value, but the mosquitoes and blackflies, especially in quantity and capacity, were a new element. With such stimulating help, the material was laid upon the ground in six or seven days by the cayuses and their proud owner.

"The next important move was to raise the building; but the Crees were not adept in corner-laying. What was to be done? Another trip to Edmonton was in order. I luckily secured a good mechanic, took two corners myself, and in fifteen days the foundation was laid, walls up, rafters fitted, and doors and windows ready.

"The mechanic, Mr. James McDonald, a sterling Scotchman, could not

remain longer. What with whip-sawing, hauling (from Edmonton, of course) shingles, shingling, plastering, laying floors, and conducting services with the Indians, the autumn and winter were diligently employed. The mission house is situated near the river, on the southern limit of Samson's reserve, where 320 acres are set apart by the government for a mission lot."

The Roman Catholics were not far behind. In the summer of 1882, Father H. Bellevaire built a rude shack of poles and pine bark in the Bear Hills, but finding conditions unsuitable for passing the winter, he left the area in favor of the half-breed settlement at Selvais crossing. During the winter of 1882-3 the task fell to Father Constantine Scollen, with the result that this priest can be considered to be the first R.C. missionary in the area.

Father Scollen was an untiring, and sometimes outspoken, man who always seemed to be one step ahead of civilization. He had built the first Roman Catholic mission in southern Alberta in 1873 and had been camped at the present site of Calgary when the Mounted Police arrived to build their fort. He remained in the Bear Hills area from 1882 until 1886, laboring among the bands of Bobtail and Ermineskin. Immediately after the Riel Rebellion he sounded his displeasure that the Indians were not getting a "square deal" and abandoned his mission. In August an official announcement was made that the intractable priest had of his own accord severed connections with the Diocese of St. Albert, and by November he was living in Calgary. In the following month he said goodbye to the Canadian west and accepted a post in the Diocese of Cincinnati, Ohio, where he died in 1903.

After spending two winters in the Bear Hills area, it became apparent to the energetic Father Scollen that he must build a permanent mission among the Crees. So in November, 1884, he and Father Gibillon chose a site near the Leavings of the Battle River where a log building was completed before the end of the year. Besides serving as a religious centre, the mission became an important stopping place on the Calgary-Edmonton trail, and although its existence was short-lived (a new one was built at Hobbema in the following year) it gained historic importance because of the vital part it played in the Riel Rebellion.

While Father Scollen was becoming established in the area, the Methodists were rapidly increasing their labors. Early in 1883, a school house was built one and a half miles north of the Methodist mission by Rev. Glass and several Indians, and during this period Rev. Glass was ordained.

The Stonies under Sharphead and Crees under Muddy Bull were served during 1881 to 1884 by the Methodist mission at Pigeon Lake and when the two bands moved to the Bear Hills, Rev. John Nelson was selected to follow them. When Sharphead's band took a reserve in the Wolf Creek area in 1884, Rev. Nelson built a mission house and a church-school, located about four miles south-west of Ponoka.

Rev. Nelson was born on August 21st, 1848, and served his first mission at Pigeon Lake. In 1893, he became principal of the impressive stone school for Indians west of Red Deer and served at numerous points throughout Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario until his death.

His mission, located on the Calgary-Edmonton trail, became a stopping house as well as religious headquarters for the Stonies. "The school was opened as soon as it was possible," recorded Rev. Nelson, "We organized a class of thirty members; many of them I believe are trying to serve the Lord in His own appointed way."

The Traders

FUR trading during the early years was carried on almost exclusively from Fort Edmonton and Rocky Mountain House. It wasn't until the Indians began settling on their reserves that smaller outposts were established to bring in the trade of furs and to provide a place for the Indians to dispose of their treaty money.

Soon after the Crees settled in the Bear Hills, two arch rival companies constructed trading posts at the Battle River Crossing, about two miles upstream from Ponoka. These were the Hudson's Bay Company store, under the direction of Thomas Taylor, and the I. G. Baker and Company store, operated by A. W. Colpman. In addition, a free trader with the hyper-common name of Macdonald built a shanty at this point and carried out intermittent business with the Indians. There is little doubt that this was the William Macdonald who traded in the Battle River area for several years and by 1891 had a store near the present Hobbema.

The H.B.C. post was built in 1884 and it is likely that the I. G. Baker store was constructed in the same year, as a traveller records stopping there for supplies in November. The Bay man, Thomas Taylor, was born in 1831, the son of a H.B.C. employee, and served as an apprentice clerk in the west until 1870. In 1884, the H.B.C. posted him to Battle River Crossing where he remained until August, 1885. He then was sent to Lac Ste. Anne where he retired in 1902 and died two years later. "No better Indian trader ever lived," said the Edmonton Bulletin in announcing his death, "or one who more thoroughly understood the customs, manners and ways of the Indians. Speaking Salteaux and Cree as fluently as an Indian, French like a French-Canadian, and English in a manner that marked him at once as a man of superior education."

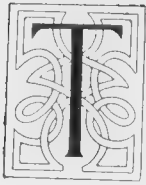
Less is known of Colpman, although he did reside in Fort Macleod for some years. When he was sent to Battle River Crossing by the Montana company of I. G. Baker, he immediately established three other sub-posts—at Selvais crossing near Duhamel, Whitefish Lake and Lac La Biche.

FORT OSTELL

A trading post of Hudson's Bay Company was pillaged near this point by Cree Indians on April 11, 1885, during the Riel Rebellion. On May 10, a company of the 65th Battalion, Mount Royal Rifles, under the command of Capt. John B. Ostell, arrived at the crossing to establish a fort for the protection of local settlers. The trading post was fortified, loopholed, and named Fort Ostell in honor of its commander. It was abandoned two months later after the successful suppression of the rebellion.

This large sign, erected by the Alberta Department of Highways, in co-operation with the provincial publicity department, stands on Highway No. 2, just near the Battle River. It commemorates Fort Ostell, whose actual site is less than half a mile from the spot where the highway of today crosses the river. It was one of the stopping places on the old Calgary-Edmonton Trail.

Rebellion!



THE activities of the Indians and half-breeds of the Battle River area during the Riel Rebellion of 1885 forms one of the most colorful chapters in the turbulent history of the Ponoka district. Within a ten mile radius of the modern town, stores and missions were pillaged, wagon trains were attacked, couriers captured or pursued, and the threat of a wholesale uprising lay like an unexploded powder keg for several weeks.

In January of 1885, the white settlements within a ten-mile radius of Battle River Crossing included two Methodist missions, a Roman Catholic mission, two fur company stores and a free trader's shanty. In all, the adult white population totalled about ten persons. In addition, there was a constant itinerant traffic of couriers, stage coaches, wagon trains and other travellers along the Calgary-Edmonton trail, which passed through most of these white settlements.

The Indians of northern Alberta formerly were under a single agent, but in November, 1884, they were divided into two agencies, with Sam B. Lucas being promoted to the position of sub-agent in charge of the Bear Hills' bands. He had his agency farm and ration buildings located in the Peace Hills, near the modern city of Wetaskiwin, but during the early months of 1885 he announced plans for moving all agency buildings to a point near the Battle River Leavings, not far from Father Scollen's mission.

Judging from all indications, 1885 was destined to become a banner year for the Battle River Crossing. A new route for the Edmonton-Calgary trail was laid out from the Leavings to the new bridge and a site was cleared for the new Indian agency. Residents of Fort Edmonton, who knew of the fertility of the soil in the district, undoubtedly prophesied that many of the settlers now arriving at the newly-christened "Red Deer City," would find their way northward to the virgin farming lands.

But, in the face of these hopeful dreams, other forces were at work. The Crees, though settling down to farming, were worried about rumors coming from the Battleford country where many of their old friends from the buffalo days now resided. In their own camps lived several Indians from Big Bear's band, and a few miles east, on the shores of Buffalo Lake, several small bands of Crees and Saulteaux from Battleford and Qu'Appelle were said to be starving.

During the previous summer, a number of Indians from the camps of Little Pine and Big Bear had arrived from the prairies and held a gigantic Thirst Dance on the reserve. During their stay, they told of the discontent of the half-breeds in Saskatchewan and their attempts to get Louis Riel back from his exile in Montana.

Runners brought war offerings of tobacco from the camps of Little Pine and Big Bear to Bobtail in February, sowing the first seeds of unrest among the young braves. Early in March, mission teacher Glass heard the whispers of discontent from the Cree reserves, and on the 14th he hinted darkly in the



CHIEF BOBTAIL

Edmonton Bulletin that "immoral influences from various sources are at work among the Indians here."

Father Scolien was disturbed by the rumors of a rebellion and made a special trip to Buffalo Lake late in March to see if reports of starving Indians were true. There he found between seventy and eighty Indians "squalid and famine stricken." Among them were people from Bear Hills and a portion of Big Bear's band under the leadership of the chief's son, Tatwasin, who reported that his father was soon going to arrive at the lake. Also among the destitute Indians were some Saulteaux from Qu'Appelle under the leadership of Thunder, a few half-breeds, and a famous old blind ex-trader and scout named Jimmy Joek Bird.

By the time the priest had surveyed the scene and travelled to Fort Edmonton, the month of March had ended, the Crees and half-breeds in the Battleford area had launched their uprising, and the bloody, grief-stricken month of April was just beginning. On about the first of the month, Bobtail called a mass council of bands to discuss the latest news of the rebellion and announced that he was ready and willing to join the fight. Samson, Ermineskin and Muddy Bull, on the other hand, said they wanted no part in the rebellion and tried to control the lusty ambitions of younger warriors in their own bands. But only Muddy Bull was entirely successful. He took his small band into the wilds near the Bear Hills Lake and remained at peace throughout the troubled weeks.

Sam Lucas heard the first official news of the rebellion when he arrived in Fort Edmonton for supplies. A courier, James Mowat, had just left to inform the lieutenant-governor, at that time in Calgary, of the hostile actions in the district, and all the populace of the fort was anxiously repeating all the wild rumors and enquiring for any concrete news. Mowat had been paid the princely sum of \$26 to travel the turbulent Calgary-Edmonton trail and attempt to cross the unsettled Bear Hills country. It was later discovered that he not only was successful, but covered the 200 miles on horseback in the record time of 36 hours.

The latest definite word brought from the troubled Saskatchewan area was that Big Bear had massacred the village of Frog Lake and was at that very moment en route to the Bear Hills' reserves. The sub-agent, fearing for the lives of his family and relatives, organized an armed party of five men and set out next morning for the government farm. They reached Peace Hills the same day, but found everything quiet, with only Muddy Bull's inoffensive band camped in the vicinity. On the morning of April 9th, Sam Lucas loaded up his family, and those of his brother, F. Lucas, and brother-in-law, James Aylwin, into a wagon and returned to Fort Edmonton without mishap. Later the remainder of the employees at the Bear Hills' agency were told by Ermineskin that for their own safety they should follow their agent. All, with the exception of Philip Whitford, Jr., took the chief's advice and departed for Fort Edmonton the same day. Whitford remained behind to continue issuing rations to the now openly hostile Crees and remained faithfully at his post for the next unsettled ten days. J. Lee, interpreter at the reserve, fled to the fort with the employees but, because his personal safety had been assured by the chiefs, he returned a few days later with supplies of bacon and flour.

The Crees, now completely out of control, gathered into one camp on



S. B. LUCAS

Bobtail's reserve and there listened to the rebellious words of Bobtail and his son Coyote. On the 8th, several young bucks tried to raid a small government lumber camp on the Battle River, but were halted by Ermineskin before the plans could be executed. Samson, seeing that he could not possibly hold his warriors at bay, hurried southward to find his old missionary friend, Rev. John McDougall, in the hopes that he could quieten his people. About this same time, a courier from Calgary was sighted by two Cree warriors near the Battle River Crossing and was pursued northward until he lost them near the Bear Hills. When he arrived in Fort Edmonton, the courier carried the latest news from the missionaries and traders in the Battle River country.

"There appears to be plenty of fixed ammunition among the Indians at Bear Hills and plenty of Winchester rifles," reported the courier. "There has been a great deal of night movements among them lately, riders passing to and fro at all hours of the night." At Peace Hills, the courier found Whitford hard at work and in complete possession of the government stores, while Ermineskin and Muddy Bull were watching over the cattle and other possessions.

From their trading posts on the Battle River, the three traders watched anxiously as the excitement fanned the fires of violence in the Cree tribes. Couriers travelling from Calgary to Edmonton reported the latest news in the bloody Saskatchewan rebellion and the Indians spread their own versions, sometimes fantastic, about the victories of Riel's forces. Thomas Taylor, in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company store, was the first to break under the pressure. When he received word that almost all the whites north of Battle River had fled to Fort Edmonton, he abandoned his trading post and scurried to the Red Deer Crossing, where he joined settlers in their flight to Calgary.

It was immediately after the flight of Taylor that violence flared up briefly among the bands. On April 11th, young warriors from the bands of Bobtail and Samson, under the leadership of Coyote, discovered that the H.B.C. store was deserted, so they fell upon the post and pillaged it of all supplies. Colpman of the I. G. Baker store and Macdonald the free trader, watching the events from the armed safety of their own trading posts, were informed that they would not be harmed, but Macdonald was not long in following the tracks of Taylor after the raid was over.

On that same day, violence also flared up at the Glass mission and Nelson's mission on Sharphead's reserve. The Stonies had pledged to take no part in the rebellion, so when the Crees began their hostile actions, old Sharphead took the advice of Rev. Nelson and led his band back to the shores of Battle Lake, west of the reserve.

"Tobacco was sent them to join at once and strike for their rights," said Rev. Nelson. "The tobacco was refused. I advised them to pitch off on a hunt for a short time. They did so immediately and while the tents were being pulled down and the horses packed, the representative men met at the mission house, unsolicited, and asked me to write a letter to Governor Dewdney, assuring him of their loyalty to the government. Some of them expressed deep regret at leaving. One man said: 'My heart is sore leaving our church and school. I tell you this from my heart, not with my lips only.'"

When the courier informed Revs. Glass and Nelson that the settlers from the Red Deer Crossing were fleeing southward, the ministers decided to take their wives and children to the safety of Fort Calgary. Rev. Glass and family left the Samson Reserve and were in the process of hitching up the teams at the Nelson home when a war party of Crees came upon them. Arrogantly the Indians forced the missionaries to unhitch their horses and then, while the two families watched helplessly the Indians broke into the mission, pillaged it, destroyed the furniture, killed the few cattle, and rode off with the teams of horses.

When the Hudson's Bay Company factor at Fort Edmonton heard from

Interpreter Lee that the Crees had spoken of raiding the Battle River store, he sent four men—James Rowland, P. Tate, John Norrish, Jr., and L. Larocque—to investigate and, if possible, to determine the intentions of the Bear Hills' tribes. But, by the time the men were en route to the Peace Hills, the raids were already underway. At the Indian Agency, the men found everything quiet, with Whitford still in control. Big Bear's son, Tatwasin, and other trouble-makers, had come in from Buffalo Lake and were quietly drawing rations, while those of Muddy Bull's and Ermineskin's bands showed no inclination towards rebellion.

On April 12th, a Sunday, the peace party met Ermineskin and five of his head men. When the chiefs agreed to accompany the whites on their tour of inspection of white settlers and the other bands, Ermineskin immediately armed himself "as there was a coolness between his band and that of the other two chiefs." The peace party proceeded to the Leavings of the Battle River, where they found Father Scollen, together with his younger brother, P. Scollen, a lay brother, still ministering to the Indians.

"Shortly before their arrival at the mission," announced the Edmonton Bulletin, "a courier had arrived there from Calgary with a letter to the Rev. Father from Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney, informing him as to the situation and asking him to use his influence with the Bear Hills bands to keep them within bounds. The courier was taken prisoner by six Indians shortly after he crossed the Battle River and these were leading him past the mission to the big camp about a mile below, when they were stopped by Father Scollen, who succeeded in getting them to relinquish the courier to him."

This courier informed Father Scollen that all the settlers in the Red Deer district had fled to Calgary, leaving only B. McGillis in charge of the crossing. He also established the fact that the deserted H.B.C. post had been looted at Battle River Crossing and that Taylor had been passed en route for Calgary.

"It was part of the business of the Edmonton messengers to secure the safety of this store," said the Bulletin. "They, therefore, with chief Ermineskin and his men and Rev. Father Scollen, went to the camp near the proposed site of the new agency buildings, where a grand pow-wow was being held. There they found some 36 tents of Indians, with a large dancing tent erected. The dance was going on when they arrived and was rather an exciting affair. Between the drumming, yelling and firing of guns, the chances of a general massacre seemed excellent.

"The Indians were decked in the clothes and finery taken from the H.B. store and were having a huge time generally. While dancing they taunted Ermineskin with being a coward for not joining them in robbing the store, called him an old wife and all the contemptuous names they could think of, but he bore it all calmly."

As his people hurled these insults, Ermineskin answered them quietly by saying: "I have seen much fighting in my lifetime and I have never shown any cowardice. You young people who now insult me have never seen any fighting. Perhaps if you did you would run sooner than I."

Ermineskin then turned his attention to his older brother, Bobtail, who was a guiding influence behind the raids and pillaging. Without success he urged the elder war chief to quieten his braves and force them to hand over their plunder.

Father Scollen then tried to address the frenzied dancers. At first they only drummed louder, fired shots into the air and shouted to drown out his voice. One of the turbulent youths shook his rifle at the priest and shouted: "You are always talking when you shouldn't and we don't want to hear you now!" The black-robed French-Canadian persisted, however, and as he later described it: "Whilst I was trying to restore order . . . bullets were flying over my head through the lodge."

At last, after ignoring the many threats and gestures by the painted braves, the patient priest succeeded in making himself heard. He reminded the Crees that he had always been their friend, that he had been willing to help them whenever they attempted to do anything honest. But now, when they were threatening rebellion, he opposed their every move towards evil and, in his own words, "would do so again under similar circumstances, though they should kill me."

This statement carried more forcefulness and truth than many of the wild rumors which were then rampant in the camps. The dancing ended and the drums were silenced as the natives gathered around their black-robed friend. The priest, realizing that stern steps would have to be taken to keep the younger warriors in check, announced that he had communications from the "White Beard"—as the Crees called Lieut.-Gov. Edgar Dewdney—and from the "Trader Chief" of the Hudson's Bay Company at "Beaver Hills House"—Fort Edmonton. When he displayed the two letters, the impudent braves demanded that he swear upon his Holy Bible that he would read them only what was written. Wisely, the priest complied with their wishes; then read the promises and guarantees contained in the two epistles.

"After the letters had been read and considerable talk had taken place," recorded Edmonton's only newspaper, "the Indians who had robbed the store decided to make restitution of as much of the goods as remained in their hands on condition that they should not be punished for what they had done. About a wagon load of goods was handed over, to be replaced in the store."

Bobtail then made a statement to the peace party, giving his reasons for the raid. "We had heard rumors that there had been fighting and pillaging at Prince Albert and Battleford," he began, "and it had been started at Edmonton. We saw the government officials clearing out, leaving everything behind them, and thinking all we heard was true, we decided we might as well get our share of the plunder before the other bands came in and took it, as they would in any case." Armed with this feeble explanation, he added: "I regret very much the robbing of the store. I tried to prevent my young men from committing the act, but was unable to do so."

The recovered goods were taken to the deserted H.B.C. store by Larocque who, after making a careful inventory, found that about \$17 worth of goods—mostly food—was still unaccounted for in the stock. During those days, a considerable amount of goods could be purchased for that price, indicating that the major part of the trading post's edible supply was immediately consumed by the rebel camp. The Hudson's Bay Company later obtained through the War Claims Commission a total of \$349, covering losses from raids on both the Battle River and Lac Ste. Anne stores.

Before returning to the safety of Fort Edmonton, the peace party left Larocque in charge of the trading post and sent a half-breed courier to bring back the frightened Taylor from Calgary. John Norrish, Jr., also was left at the Crossing to issue rations as was agreed at the meeting with the Crees.

The council with the peace party and the knowledge that dire consequences would follow any attempts to join the insurrectionists had the desired effect of preventing any bloodshed in the district. But other incidents which also occurred during the next trying days included the raiding of Interpreter Lee's shipment of ration flour, the robbery of a supply wagon, and the attempted burning of the Battle River bridge.

Samson, who had left the reserve a few days before the trouble broke out, was successful in contacting his friend Rev. McDougall. The missionary, together with three trusted Stony friends, was just about ready to leave from Morley when, happily, a request from the Alberta Field Force gave him an official reason for the trip. Major General T. Blain Strange, commanding the force, asked the Methodist missionary if he would proceed north along the Calgary-Edmonton trail to warn the Indians that the military force was

on its way. Rev. McDougall accepted the post and travelled with Samson to the Battle River Crossing. Here he held a council with the bands and informed the Indians that a large number of armed white men would soon enter their country to punish those who were trying to rebel against the Queen. All others, he told them, would receive the protection and friendship they deserved. After successfully completing this parley, Rev. McDougall continued on to Fort Edmonton and later served with distinction in the battle area.

After the first signs of rebellion, all commerce was virtually halted on the Calgary-Edmonton trail. Freighters on the road turned back to the nearest point of safety, and the only messages considered important enough to send a courier on the dangerous journey were those containing war news.

James Mowat, the messenger who had successfully made the journey to Calgary during the first days of the rebellion, returned to Fort Edmonton on April 20th, with the welcome news that the first troops of the 65th Battalion, Mount Royal Rifles, had arrived by train from Montreal and were making preparations to move north.

On his return journey, Mowat had found Thomas Taylor, the H.B.C. employee, and several freighters waiting at Red Deer Crossing for the arrival of the troops before proceeding any farther north. He reached Battle River Crossing on April 18th, where Colpman was still trading at the I. G. Baker store and at the Leavings, Father Scollen was continuing his work among the excited bands. Here, too, Mowat found Whitford still on the scene to issue rations, but as there were no Indians in the vicinity, the frontiersman decided to return to Fort Edmonton with the courier. Upon their arrival at the fort, the pair reported the only trouble had occurred a few miles south of the Saskatchewan River, where local Indians forced them to detour around their reserve. These Indians although peaceful, had been angered at the refusal of settlers to allow them to trade at Fort Edmonton during the rebellion.

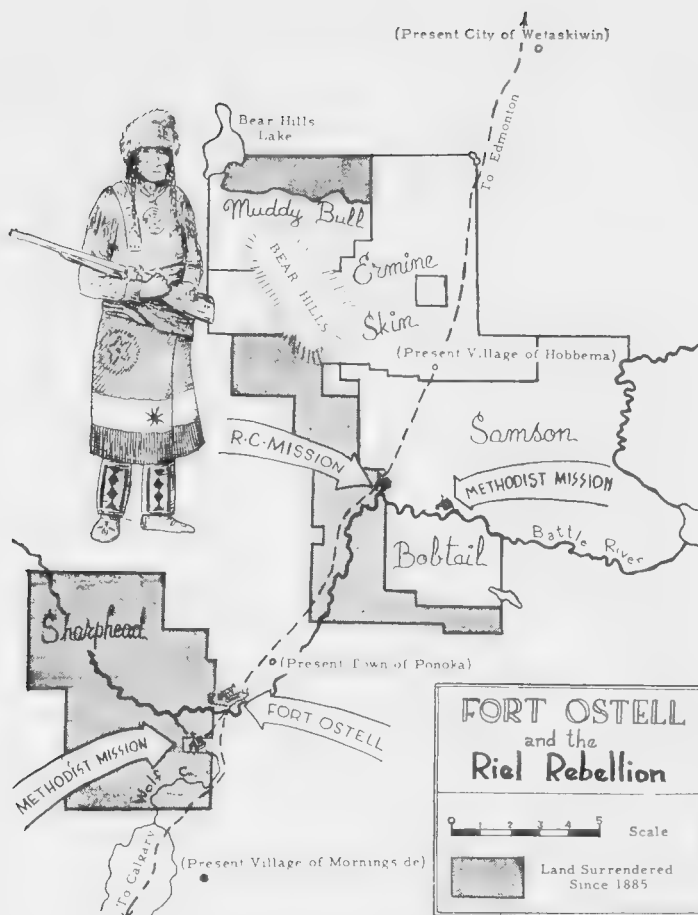
Whitford said that during his stay in the Battle River area, leading warriors from Beardy's band had arrived from Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, and had told of a battle between Louis Riel's forces and the white volunteers in which a thousand of the latter had been slaughtered.

L. Larocque, looking after the supplies at the H.B.C. store, saw the dangerous reactions caused by these and other wild stories which were rampant among the Indians. So the cautious French-Canadian loaded all the Company's supplies into a wagon and travelled to the safety of Fort Edmonton. When he arrived on April 20th, he commented that the Indians were "disposed to act ugly."

Father Lacombe, who during the early days of the rebellion was occupied in holding councils with the unsettled Blackfeet, received anxious letters from Father Scollen and from the St. Albert diocese about the activities of Bobtail's band. However, when he arrived at the Battle River on about April 20th, he found that Rev. McDougall's warnings had served a very useful purpose. "The law-breakers at the Bear Hills are frightened at the thought of troops," he told the worried populace at Fort Edmonton.

In Calgary, the Alberta Field Force completed its plans to move north. Hastily organized, it contained battalions of the 65th Mount Royal Rifles from Montreal, the 91st Winnipeg Light Infantry, the 9th Voltigeurs from Quebec, the Alberta Mounted Rifles, and Steele's Scouts of the North-West Mounted Police.

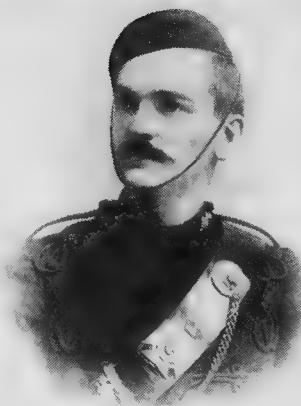
The first group of these, under General Strange's personal command, left Calgary on April 20th. It was made up of about 220 men including 80 N.W. M.P. and four companies of the 65th Mount Royal Rifles. They reached Battle River Crossing on April 28th and camped there for the night. By that time Father Lacombe had returned from St. Albert and was on hand for their arrival.



A glance at this map will show clearly the position of Fort Ostell, situated as it was between two Indian reservations, and directly on the Calgary-Edmonton trail. The Sharphead reserve has today disappeared and much of the Bobtail reserve (shaded portion) has also been opened for settlement.

"Here I was met by Father Scollen with Ermineskin and Bobtail," General Strange later reported. "I did not shake hands or receive the chiefs, but gave them to understand through Father Scollen that their treatment by the government would depend on their conduct for the future. The Rev. Father Lacombe, Mr. and Mrs. Glass, and Mr. and Mrs. Nelson also came into camp, the latter reporting their property had been plundered by Indians."

At last the law had reached Battle River Crossing! Until that memorable day of April 28th, 1885, no vestige of law had been seen in the district. Patrols of the North-West Mounted Police had been little concerned with the area and the "strong arm of the law" had been nothing but a will-o-the-wisp to the unruly bands. But after seeing the scarlet-clad men of the N.W.M.P. and the Nile green uniforms of the 65th battalion, the Crees were left with no doubt that the well-armed representatives of the Queen could soon wipe them out if the necessity arose.



CAPT. OSTELL

By the time General Strange had reached Battle River and continued on to Fort Edmonton, a second party of the Alberta Field Force was on the trail. This group of 242 men—including 24 N.W.M.P., three companies of the 65th, and 68 men of the transport force—under the command of Inspector A. Bowden Perry, had left Calgary on April 21st. After a difficult crossing of the Red Deer River they reached the Battle River on May 3rd, giving the Crees their second show of might.

In Fort Edmonton, the commander of the Alberta Field Force conferred with local officials and decided to fortify several strategic points in the district. Among these were the Indian Agency in the Peace Hills (near Wetaskiwin) and the H.B.C. store at Battle River Crossing. Arrangements previously had been made on the journey northward to garrison a fort at Red Deer Crossing.

Captain John Benjamin Ostell and Lieutenant Joseph Leandre Plinquet, officers in command of No. 1 Company, 65th Mount Royal Rifles, were ordered to take about 20 men to the Battle River.

"You have been chosen because of the military reputation which you have acquired by your ability and your energy," stated the official instructions handed to Capt. Ostell on May 7th. "The protection of our line of communication with our base provision depots is of essential importance. The country to the east of your fort is very difficult and will certainly become a line of operations along which Indian marauders in small bands will try to capture our provision transports. You will occupy the old Hudson's Bay post near the house of R. P. (Rev. Pere) Scollen.

"You will put it into as complete a state of defence as possible, constructing a defence on your flank in such a way as to prevent the enemy from approaching near enough to burn the house.

"You will probably include R. P. Scollen's house in your defence line. You will mark the range of your carbines from the fort to all the objects round about and accustom your men to measure by paces these different distances so that they will remember them, and their fire will be more effective in case of attack. After you have put your fort in a state of defence you will

employ your men in repairing in their spare time the roads in the neighbourhood of your post. At the same time do not leave your fort without protection; on the contrary, exercise the greatest vigilance day and night."

With these concise orders in hand, Captain Ostell and company left Fort Edmonton the same day for the Battle River. On the following day they met Lt. Col. Osborne Smith, leading four companies of the 91st Winnipeg Light Infantry, and 50 men of the Alberta Mounted Rifles, en route to Fort Edmonton and the scene of the conflict farther east.

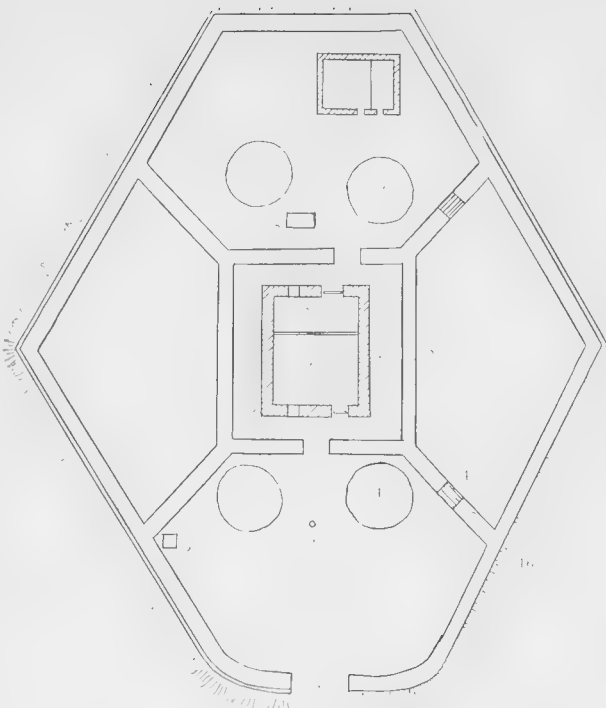
Ostell and Plinquet both hailed from Montreal. Capt. Ostell was born on December 4th, 1859, his grandfather being an Englishman from London and his grandmother a French-Canadian. He joined the 65th Battalion in October, 1883, and was promoted to lieutenant in March, 1884.

Six months later he was made a captain. He resigned soon after the rebellion and died in Chicago in 1927.

When Capt. Ostell arrived at the Hudson's Bay Company store on May 9th, he made immediate plans for fortification, and during the next few days the hardy French-Canadian soldiers—receiving wages of fifty cents a day—began their work. First, a trench $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep was dug around the store at some distance from the building. In all, the trench was about 200 feet in diameter. Then a moat five feet deep was dug around the house and connected to the outer trench by means of four canals. The walls of the post were strengthened with additional timbers and 28 loopholes were cut between the logs to allow the men to fire at an enemy with relative safety. The building itself was partitioned into two sections—one for the officers' quarters and the other for a kitchen and dormitory.

Earth from the trench was piled in the form of a regular embankment and an abittis consisting of sharpened branches was formed on the banks. Strong barricades were constructed to protect the doors and windows of the post, while a turf wall six feet high was built all around the house above the moat.

A log stable was located within the compound and the only method of bringing horses to or from the building was across two canals, both of which



Plan of Fort Ostell

1. Entrance. 2. Sentry box.
3. Flag pole. 4. Soldiers' tent.
5. Guard tent. 6. Kitchen and dormitory. 7. Officers' quarters. 8. Oven. 9. Baker's tent.
10. Captain's tent. 11. Stables.
12. Trench. 13. Canals. 14. Movable bridges. 15. Moat.
16. Palisades. 17. Earthworks.

were spanned by movable bridges. Four bell tents were also erected within the barricade—one guard tent, a soldiers' tent, the captain's tent, and a baker's tent. Also, at the rear of the fort, an open oven was constructed while in the front a sentry box and flagpole were erected.

It is interesting to note that the Fort Ostell Chapter I.O.D.E. has an exact reproduction of the flag which once flew proudly over this rustic post. It was obtained from a brother of Capt. Ostell, who stated, "Our boys used what they could lay their hands on to build a flag, and I have a suspicion that the red part might have possibly been the skirt of an old Indian squaw."

Just how successful the fortifications at Ostell would have been during an actual attack cannot be surmised, as the post was never engaged in a fight with the Indians. It is certain, however, that the work of the men was closely watched by the Cree bands who soon realized that any attempt to overpower the Fort would result in a tremendous loss of lives. When the French-Canadians finally finished their arduous work, they breathed a sigh of relief and decided that, seeing the store was now officially a fort, it should have a name befitting its position. By unanimous choice, the men christened the log post "Fort Ostell," in honor of their commander. Thus was born a name which is still preserved today by the Fort Ostell Public Library and the Fort Ostell Chapter of the I.O.D.E.

A short while later, Monseigneur Grandin, of the Oblate Order at St. Albert, visited the garrison to give it his official blessing. The name chosen for the blessing was "Saint Jean d'Ostell"—combining the name of a saint with that of the captain. While at the post, the monseigneur promised that if ever a Roman Catholic parish was established in the area after the district became populated, it also would receive the name of "Saint Jean d'Ostell."

During the period of construction, the 65th Battalion had many visitors. Besides the regular stream of stage coaches, wagon trains and travellers which had resumed traffic on the road, two more military groups heading for the big fight in Saskatchewan passed the post. These were two segments of the 91st Winnipeg Light Infantry, which passed Fort Ostell on May 17th and May 28th.

After the post was well fortified, the captain established friendly relations with the Stonies of Sharphead's band. "I can depend on these men," the acting Indian Agent spoke of the Stonies, "and could I procure arms for them would engage them to keep the Bear Hills quiet and to keep the road from Edmonton to Battle River open."

Although it appears the Crees were less friendly than their neighbors, no further trouble was encountered and soon after the establishment of the post, communication between Calgary and Edmonton was uninterrupted once more.

By June 27th, Batoche had fallen, Louis Riel had been captured, Big Bear's rebel band had suffered defeat at the hands of the Alberta Field Force, and many leaders of the rebellion were awaiting trial in Regina. And on that day, No. 1 Company left for Fort Edmonton.

Thus the life of Fort Ostell as a military post was about fifty days—from May 9th to June 27th, 1885.

"They will not carry away with them the most pleasant impressions of the North-West," commented the Edmonton Bulletin upon the arrival of the troops at the Fort. "Almost the whole of the time during which they were in garrison was occupied in erecting fortifications."

After a few days' stay in Fort Edmonton, the companies of the 65th Mount Royal Rifles proceeded down river to Fort Pitt and there rejoined their comrades who had taken part in the battles at Frenchman's Butte, Loon Lake, and other points in Saskatchewan.

The government had decided not to let the raiders of the H.B.C. store and the Methodist missions go unpunished, but chose to wait until the autumn

reaty payments before making the arrests. When the eventful day came around, a detachment of N.W.M.P. from Fort Edmonton accompanied the Indian Department officials to the reserve and there arrested Coyote, son of Bobtail; Stony Paul, of Ermineskin's band; and Souzie, of Samson's band. The first two men were charged with leading the raids on the store and mission, while the latter was accused of raiding the government ration shipment.

When Bobtail heard that his son had been arrested, he tried to incite his band to force the police to give up the prisoners. But the Crees, likely with thoughts of Fort Ostell fresh in their minds, refused to comply. The old chief then threatened to call upon his friends in the Blackfeet nation to come north and "clean out" the whites. But the police ignored his threats and pleas, and took Coyote and Stony Paul to the fort. The third prisoner, Souzie, was adjudged too ill to be moved.

In the face of little or no factual evidence in the cases, there appeared to be little likelihood that the rebellious Crees could be successfully convicted of their offences. However, the two healthy prisoners were left in the guard house for an extended stay, then turned loose with a severe reprimand.

During the following spring, those who had done their best to keep the rebellion under control on the reserve were given rewards by the Indian Department in the form of oxen and cattle. Of the chiefs, Muddy Bull was the only man thus recognized. Shortly before his death, the old patriarch was informed that he had been given two oxen for his part in keeping his braves under control.

Others who received gifts of oxen or cattle were: Jenastin, Rattlesnake's Child, Joe, and Kanawatch—all of Ermineskin's band; Woodpecker, Louis, George Pott and John Pott—all of Samson's band; and George Bear, Piratue and Muskakweewein—all of Sharphead's band.

The spring of 1886 also saw Bobtail accept the half-breed scrip. The chief, who was still angry at the treatment accorded his son, gave up all rights and privileges on the reserve and moved with several of his followers to private lands.

Then progress picked up where it had left off in the spring of 1885. The Calgary-Edmonton trail was going to be officially surveyed, the future looked bright, and the rebellious days of the great uprising were over.

In June, 1886, the first post office in the district was opened at James Alywin's homestead, near Menaik. This first settler in the area had formerly worked for the Indian Department but in 1880 he had left to become a homesteader. The new post office was named Holbrook and was retained under that name until March of 1904. Another sign of progress occurred when the well-known trader, F. W. Padmore, built a store at Wolf Creek, near the Methodist mission. After successfully operating the business for some time, the trader sold out to the firm of McCue and Elliott in 1889.



Telephones Come To Ponoka

Before Ponoka had a telephone exchange or any telephones, there were two toll stations, at Water Glen and Asker, operating through Wetaskiwin. The Ponoka Exchange was opened in the dispensary of McKinnell's Drug store in 1908. There were around 35 telephones and two country lines, besides the ones above mentioned. Miss Lillie Sayers (Mrs. L. Goodman) was the first operator, answering calls and waiting on customers in the store. In the local office today there are fourteen operators and five boards, with the sixth board soon to be added.

Here Comes The Railroad!

The people north of the Bow River had cried long and loud for a railway line into their country after the C.P.R. arrived at Calgary in 1883. Promises were made, companies with fancy sounding names were organized, and soothing words came from the East—but no railroad.

Finally in 1890—seven years after Calgary first started to enjoy the luxury of regular rail service—the first definite move towards the construction of a railroad was made. This came about with the formation of a firm having the impressive title of the “Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company.” However, everyone claimed it was merely another way of saying the “Canadian Pacific Railway.”

Surveys for the new line were started early in 1890 by M. H. McLeod and by late July he had completed the southern half of the track and reached the Battle River at the exact point where the old wooden bridge had been burned during the rebellion. Early in September the party camped at Aylwin's place and from there moved across the Bear Hills' plain towards the Peace Hills. The grading parties soon followed from Calgary behind the surveyors and by the end of 1890, the steel spanned the prairies from Calgary to the Red Deer River.

Nothing more was done until the spring of 1891. By May 4th of that year, the track was pushed northward to the Blind Man River, while grading camps were strung out all the way to the Battle River. The outfit of Lake and Carlin of Edmonton obtained the contract for grading north of Battle River and had cut the right-of-way through the present town of Ponoka by the middle of May. The track-laying crews followed right behind the graders and on June 8th, 1891, the steel reached the present site of Ponoka.

The men working on the railway lines in those days had no easy life. Besides a distinct shortage of any mechanical work-savers, food was expensive and difficult to obtain, wages were low, and sickness was prevalent. Men working on the grading crews received \$1.50 per day and had to pay \$4 a week for board. To make matters worse, pay was received only during the time of actual labor, with nothing being paid during rainy weather, moving of camp, sickness, or anything else. Naturally, the regular board had to be paid each week whether or not the men worked.

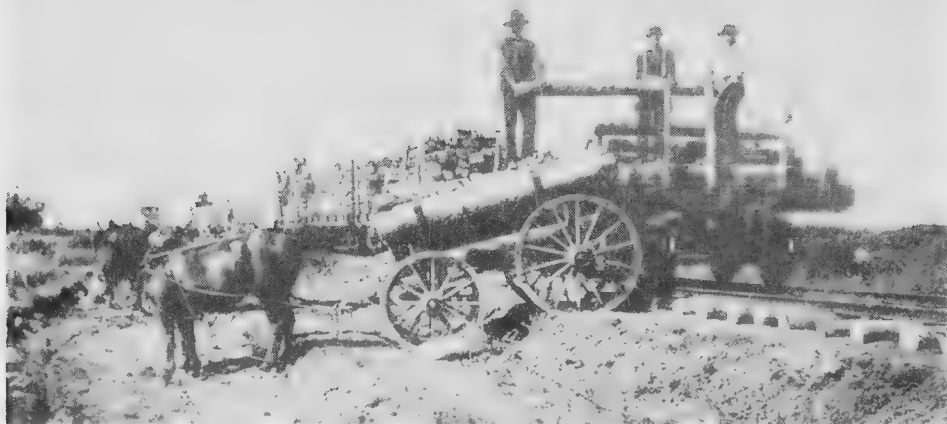
Those with teams were a little more fortunate. They received \$2.50 a day with board included, while teamsters were paid a straight \$25 per month, with board. To supplement their meagre issue of food, potatoes could be bought at 60 cents a bushel from merchants at the track, while butter sold at a slightly higher rate than Calgary prices.

During their work in the Ponoka area, the railway crews suffered considerably from influenza and other maladies. Late in May, three men died with the flu while several other seriously ill workers had to be taken back to Calgary. A few days later another worker died near Menaik and was buried in the Methodist mission plot on the Samson reserve.

The steel finally reached the North Saskatchewan River at Edmonton on July 15th, 1891, and the first train was readied for its maiden run.

The first mention of the future Town of Ponoka was made by the Edmonton Bulletin on Saturday, June 13th, when it stated: “On Monday last (June 8th) rails were laid and goods delivered at the 14th siding a short distance this side of Battle River, where the second station north of Red Deer will be placed.”

This was the beginning of Ponoka. A toiling old work train halted at the point where M. H. McLeod and his surveying party had decided to place the 14th siding. There the crews unloaded all the tools, lumber and equipment necessary to build a station.



The laying of steel! Crude ties are unloaded from flatcars onto a waiting wagon so that the tie layers can keep ahead of the men laying rails. Picture taken in the vicinity of Ponoka in 1891, the year that the C. and E. Railway was built through this district.

The first train whistled its own welcome into the 14th siding on July 27th, 1891—the first of thousands of locomotives, passenger and freight cars which have helped to elevate Ponoka to the present position it holds today. When it left Calgary, the train had carried 36 passengers, but 24 were going only as far as Red Deer. The remaining dozen probably did nothing more than blink with bored eyes at the unimpressive bush land surrounding the 14th Siding's clearing. But after a few trips, the missionaries and traders living in the Battle River began to use the new line in preference to the old trail.

The first time table released by the C. & E. Railway (as illustrated) gave no identification to those stations and sidings lying north of Red Deer. They were merely identified by number. The bi-weekly train from Calgary took seven hours and forty minutes to reach Ponoka (14th Siding), and arrived there at 2.40 p.m. It then continued northward and reached Edmonton four hours and twenty minutes later. A total of twelve hours from Calgary to Edmonton! Similarly, the southbound train took half a day for the journey, touching at Ponoka at 11.20 a.m.

The month of August, 1891, became a memorable one for points north of Red Deer. For during that month, some unknown hand of an unknown railway official filled in a name beside each of the sidings. At Siding No. 14, the hand paused; then wrote "Ponoka." Thus a name was born.

At other points along the line, Siding No. 11 became Blackfalds, No. 12 was Lacombe station, No. 13 was Morningside, No. 15 was Hobbema, No. 16 was Wetaskiwin station, No. 17 was Millet, No. 18 was Leduc station, and No. 19 was Otokswan.

The choice of names, if one muses for a moment, ranks among the oddest of the odd. Ponoka was taken from the Blackfeet word (pronounced po-no-kaw) meaning "elk," yet the Blackfeet had not claimed the Battle River area for more than sixty years, and in 1891 the Crees outnumbered the whites more than a hundred to one in the district. The Cree word for "elk" is "waskisoo" and at that time the word had not likely been adopted by any other railway station. But, to add to the confusion, the red deer and the elk are one and the same animal—so that Ponoka and Red Deer are simply two different ways of saying the same thing.

The greatest mystery, however, is why the station that lies in the centre of an Indian reserve should be named after the painter, Meyndert Hobbema, who lived in Holland from 1638 to 1709 and never saw the North American

continent during his lifetime—much less a Cree reserve.

The only explanation is that Sir William Van Horne, President of the C.P.R., was very interested in painting, and had supplied a list of painters who could be honored by having their names applied to the numerous new stations which were springing up along the railway lines. The village of Millet also came from this list—its name being that of a French painter, Jean Francois Millet, who lived between 1815 and 1875.

The first important event which accompanied the building of the railroad occurred in May, 1891, when a land office was opened in Red Deer. This office was in charge of all agricultural lands lying between Township 34 (at Bowden) and Township 47 (at Millet), including the Battle River area. By the end of the year, the Immigration Agent of the Department of Agriculture was singing the praises of the new lands, and prophesied that soon many settlers would arrive.

"I can now say that at least 300 townships lie between Calgary and Edmonton, and on each side of the Saskatchewan river, offering the greatest advantages to settlers desirous of coming here. The soil is good, water good, coal and wood in abundance."

CALGARY AND EDMONTON RAILWAY
TIME TABLE

| Mixed Going North Read Down | No. of Siding | STATIONS | | Miles from Calgary | Mixed Going South Read Up |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 7.00 | | Dep. | Calgary | Arr. | 19.00 |
| 7.25 | 1 | | Beddington | 8.5 | 18.34 |
| 7.27 | 2 | | Airdrie | 18.7 | 18.01 |
| 8.00 | 3 | | Crossfield | 28.7 | 17.29 |
| 8.32 | 4 | | Carstairs | 38.8 | 16.53 |
| 9.05 | 5 | | Didsbury | 45.9 | 16.28 |
| 9.30 | 6 | | Olds | 55.9 | 15.58 |
| 10.00 | 7 | | Bowden | 65.5 | 15.28 |
| 10.30 | 8 | | Innisfail | 74.8 | 15.00 |
| 10.58 | 9 | | Penhold | 83.4 | 14.25 |
| 12.00 | | Arr)* | | (Arr | 14.00 |
| | 10 | | Red Deer | 93. | |
| 12.30 | | Dep) | | (Dep | 13.30 |
| 13.08 | 11 | | Siding | 105.2 | 13.08 |
| 13.30 | 12 | | Siding | 112 | 12.46 |
| 14.08 | 13 | | Siding | 121.3 | 12.08 |
| 14.40 | 14 | | Siding | 128.3 | 11.20 |
| 15.30 | 15 | | Siding | 140.3 | 10.30 |
| 16.13 | 16 | | Siding | 150.5 | 9.47 |
| 17.00 | 17 | | Siding | 160.3 | 9.00 |
| 17.48 | 18 | | Siding | 172.8 | 8.12 |
| 18.33 | 19 | | Siding | 182 | 7.27 |
| 19.00 | 20 | Arr | Edmonton | Dep 191 | 7.00 |

A Mixed Train leaves Calgary station for Edmonton every Monday and Thursday at 7.00 o'clock returning Wednesday and Friday, leaving Edmonton at 7.00 o'clock and arriving in Calgary at 19 o'clock.

*Meals

Agriculture And Progress



IN the years immediately following the construction of the C. & E. Railway, Ponoka did not benefit as much as other centres in the rush of settlers from the United States and Eastern Canada. During the summer of 1892, Innisfail, Red Deer and Wetaskiwin were the scenes of most agricultural activity, while in the following summer, Olds and Lacombe took the lead in the rush for settlement.

James Aylvin, the first settler in the district, still had his farm and in 1893, Sam B. Lucas, the Indian Agent, who had suffered through the trying days of the Riel Rebellion filed on a homestead about four miles east of Ponoka.

But while the areas to the north and south of Ponoka began to be filled with new arrivals, the fertile land in the Battle River area was not completely overlooked. A few hardy pioneers, attracted by the fertility and potential of the district, began to carve a livelihood from the wilderness.

Among the first arrivals were such people as S. B. Robinson, who settled in 1892; John P. Horn in 1894; and a few other individuals who battled the elements to help open up the area.

The first step to develop the siding of Ponoka, into something more than a vacant stationhouse was made in July, 1895, when C. D. Algar was attracted by the possibilities of the district. He obtained permission to use the vacant station as a temporary residence; then set to work to build a log store. Completed in the fall, this was the first privately-owned structure within the limits of the present town. It was opened in partnership with H. A. Finch, who was bought out by Mr. Algar in the following year.

More people began to drift into the area. There were Mr. and Mrs. John Barr, Mr. and Mrs. L. M. Haley, Alex. Stickler, Mr. and Mrs. Cook Myer, Hans Larsen, Mr. and Mrs. J. Leek, Mr. and Mrs. James Ledgerwood, Mr. and Mrs. William Ledgerwood, Mr. Clink, Andrew and Will Reid, and several more.

The increased activities brought Tom Kennedy to Ponoka in 1896, to act as the first section foreman. At this time, two passenger trains ran every week, while freights came through whenever necessary.

Holbrook post office served the area faithfully in those early years, but in 1897, Ponoka had become such a focal point for district homesteaders that the Ponoka post office was opened in Algar's store.

By the beginning of 1899, there were still only a handful of people in the Ponoka area. But the next six years—1899 to 1904—soon made up for the lost years. In that short time Ponoka grew from a whistle-stop into a settlement, from a settlement into a village, and from a village into a thriving energetic town. These six years were among the busiest in the history of the area and clearly reflect the ambitions of the early pioneer settlers who were determined to build Ponoka into the finest centre in Alberta.



The First Year

In 1899, the Federal Department of Interior appointed Cook Myer as the official land guide for the Ponoka area and by autumn of the same year the virgin parkland was becoming transformed into a populated farming community.

The Myers, the Cyphers and many other families came northward from Minnesota, Nebraska, Wisconsin and other American states, while a few

settlers from Eastern Canada and overseas found their way to the farming community. These hardy people cleared the land or utilized small natural prairies, built comfortable log buildings and planted their first crops. In the autumn, the expectations of the newcomers were realized when oats yielded as high as 75 bushels to the acre and sold for 25 to 30 cents per bushel. Wheat yielded 40 bushels to the acre and barley 45 bushels to the acre—these latter grains being kept for next year's seed. Potatoes and all root crops were an outstanding success, while livestock was easily adapted to the new range land. In all, the year 1899 was a successful one for the new settlers and marked the first large scale agricultural year in the history of Ponoka.

Cook Myer, in reporting to Ottawa, stated that he had sold 31 quarter sections and located 112 homesteaders on suitable land. Some of the settlers had purchased their holdings too late in the year to sow a crop and were not locating on their lands until the spring of 1900. In addition, a few settlers found suitable land without the aid of the government guide and thus were not recorded in the year's statistics.

"I am receiving by every mail," wrote Mr Myer, "letters of inquiry, asking about locations in the Ponoka district."

The late autumn of 1899 saw the Sharphead Indian Reserve formally opened for settlement. This land which had seen so much suffering and misery among the Red Man only a decade earlier, was now the site of bustling activity by the incoming homesteaders. In Ponoka, Cook Myer opened a boarding house at his home to accommodate new arrivals; W. R. Courtright built a cedar house; and Frank Robertson, the carpenter for the district brought his new bride to the tiny settlement.

The Second Year

When December 31st, 1899, slipped into the pages of the past, so did the 19th Century and the "Gay Nineties" become a part of history. The 20th Century had arrived and with it came the settlers, starting off a new life in a new land.

"The old settlers feel very great sympathy for them," wrote a pensive homesteader. "They know what it is to leave their native province and commence life over among strangers in a strange land. It takes at least two or three years before they become accustomed to the country and can begin to accumulate very much in the line of property."

The movement of settlers into the Ponoka district eclipsed by far the settlement of the previous year. By the end of June, no less than 309 persons, with 30 carloads of belongings, had arrived at the station and announced their desire to take up homesteads in the district. Most of these people were from the United States and had heard about the district through the high pressure salesmanship of Canadian Government immigration agents touring the Mid-West. Very few of the settlers were disillusioned when they saw the rich farming land and only a few returned to their former homes.

The spring was a wet one but did not interfere greatly with the clearing, building and sowing. E. C. Price, a newly-arrived settler from Benkelman, Nebraska, began construction of a grocery store beside the post office; C. D. Algar completed his new store by the end of the year; and many other enterprising individuals began to build the settlement into a thriving community.

The old Sharphead Indian Reserve was quickly taken up by new settlers and by the end of the year only a few quarter sections were left. And from every part of the district, homesteaders announced their crops were "simply immense."

One of the settlers, D. F. Binkley, was so enthusiastic about the Ponoka district that he wrote to his home town newspaper in Jackson, Ohio, to pro-



The first real school in Ponoka was built in 1898. It was made of logs, as can be seen from the picture, and it was located just where the I.O.O.F. hall stands today. This picture of the class of 1898, includes the following youngsters: Bertha and Dora Goodman, Winnie Larsen, Mary Stretch, Mary Lucas, Mary Alice Youmans, Judy Lucas, Caley Lucas, Martha Larsen, Bertha Ledgerwood, Tommy Myer, Larry Goodman, Willie Ledgerwood, Everett Leek, Arthur Leek, Bob Haley, Harden Leek and Lawrence Haley. The teacher is Mr. Youmans.

claim the attributes of the land and to invite any of his old friends and neighbors to join him.

"The spring season was just a little wet which is true of the summer season," he explained in the *Jacksonian*, "yet it did not materially interfere as it would have done in the states. This is owing to the excellent soil conditions, it being light and more porous rendering it much less susceptible to deleterious effects of too much precipitation or too long a period of absence of rain.

"The crops of all kinds in this section were of necessity very late in sowing, as the people coming this spring had houses to prepare first and then crops. A large proportion was not sown until June and much not until late in the month. Crops notwithstanding were entirely satisfactory but by no means a fair measure for the future. I have more oats and barley as my first year's results than I raised in my ten years of farming in Ohio aggregated and have more feed of all kinds than I had in the best five years of farming combined."

It seems to be an unwritten law of the frontier that upon the heels of settlement comes the weekly newspaper. In Ponoka, it was *The Herald*, a pioneer sheet first published on August 27th, 1900, by W. D. Pitcairn. Although the weekly was printed in Lacombe, it was not long before a plant was built in Ponoka. In 1902 it was purchased by a village clerk, Eugene Rhian, and two years later became the property of the Gordon family. Throughout the years. *The Herald* has played an important part in enticing new settlers and industries to the district and has remained an active participant in community affairs.

Permanent medical services came to Ponoka during 1900 when Dr. A. Drinnan set up his practice in the settlement. This was another positive sign that the district was fast becoming a financial asset to the West and had a bright future ahead.

Politics reared its ugly head in Ponoka for the second time during the autumn when the federal elections were scheduled to be held across Canada. The first election was held in 1896, with the Liberals getting the edge over the Conservatives in a 13 to 11 victory.

The two main candidates in the 1900 elections were Frank Oliver, pioneer editor of the *Edmonton Bulletin*, already a member of Parliament for the Liberals, and R. B. Bennett, a rising young lawyer from Calgary, who was carrying the Conservative banner.

The politicians flocked to Ponoka on October 22nd, when a huge rally was held in the school house. C. D. Algar, president of the Liberal Association for the settlement, was chairman and introduced Hon. Mr. Oliver to the

crowd of homesteaders and townspeople. Most of what Mr. Oliver professed and promised meant little to the predominantly American-born group, for even the names of the political parties were strangers to the newcomers. But they did agree with the speaker when he described Ponoka as being the most rapidly growing place on the C. & E. line, populated with desirable settlers, and so on. After Mr. Oliver's speech, P. J. Nolan, a lawyer from Calgary, arose to speak on behalf of Mr. Bennett and severely attacked the policies of the government in power.

In November, when the elections were held, little enthusiasm was shown by residents of the Ponoka area, with only 69 persons voting. These few interested souls, however, showed a slight trend towards Conservatism, casting 36 votes for Mr. Bennett against 33 for Mr. Oliver. In the overall elections, Mr. Oliver retained his seat with a healthy majority.

Near the end of 1900, two ranchers travelling from Montana to Edmonton, noticed the rapid growth of Ponoka and remarked: "There must have been 20 new buildings in the course of construction. New settlers are coming in every day, mostly from the States."

This construction boom was noticeable to everyone who passed through the thriving settlement and an official estimate placed the value of construction during 1900 at \$23,000. With this remarkable development, it was no surprise when the Edmonton Bulletin announced on November 23rd: "Ponoka is to be incorporated as a village."

The Third Year

The winter dawned cold and clear over the village on the morning of January 1st, 1901. Log buildings erected by the pioneer settlers mingled with the frame structures and partially completed homes which had been built during that year. Stores lined the main street and everywhere there was the indication of activity.

During the early winter, W. H. Spackman completed his new hardware store and converted his old building into a tin shop; the Methodist Church was finished and dedicated on January 6th—its seating capacity being 200 and the overall cost of \$900 being almost paid off; O'Brien Brothers began construction of an implement shop next to Trimbell and Fairfield's livery; and the Literary and Debating Society began to hold regular meetings.

In the spring, the old settlement of log buildings was a thing of the past and Ponoka was described as "one of the most thriving towns along the line." By April, 1901, the business district of the village consisted of four dry goods and grocery stores, two hardware stores, two livery stables, three hotels—one licensed, three blacksmith shops, a millinery establishment, restaurant, saddlery, meat market, two barber shops, two lumber yards, a newspaper office, undertaker's establishment, and three implement dealers. A sawmill of Truman and Black's was under construction across the Battle River opposite the station, and a Dominion land sub-agency was located in the village.

A new metal bridge was constructed during 1900 by the Territorial Government south of the village and settlement had extended almost 20 miles on either side of the C. & E. tracks. The population of Ponoka in the spring of 1901 was estimated to be 260 persons.

The settlers continued to swarm into the rich Battle River country and soon most of the available homesteading land had been taken up. According to official reports, about 700 persons settled in the Ponoka area during the fiscal year of 1900-01. These included 37 Canadians, 409 Americans (112 from Nebraska, 66 from Iowa, 50 from North Dakota, 26 from South Dakota, 35 from Ohio, 12 from Illinois, eight from Montana, and 100 from other states).

96 persons from other foreign countries, and 108 of foreign extraction.

The crops did amazingly well during 1901, and by September the local residents stated it was a common sight to see oat crops standing six feet high, while yields of 100 bushels to the acre were considered to be average, rather than an exception. The last remaining quarter section on the old Sharphead Indian Reserve was sold during August and settlers began to gaze covetously at the vast Cree reserves lying a few miles north in the Hobbema agency. The Bobtail Reserve, being southernmost, took the particular attention of Ponoka district residents. "There are some 25,000 acres of the finest land in this reserve," stated the Ponoka Herald, "and as the Indians have no title to it, and the only Indians living on it are about fifty rebel Indians, there is no obstacle in the way of the government dealing with these bands."

But the government realized her responsibility to the native population and refused to dislodge the "rebels" for the sake of new settlers. However, after an agreement was made with the four bands in 1909, several large sections of the reserves were sold at public auction. The first of these sales took place on November 10th, 1909, when 120,000 acres of Indian land realized \$92,510. A second sale on June 22, 1910, at Ponoka, realized \$42,000 for other sections of the reserves. A third sale in 1919 saw a portion of the Bobtail Reserve acquired for soldiers' settlement.

When Rev. J. W. Boynton, a Seventh Day Adventist minister from Nebraska, settled near Ponoka, a local citizen remarked: "If the morality of a place is governed by the number of its ministers, Ponoka should be the best town in seventeen counties. We have more preachers than any town in the North-West."

But a holy centre or otherwise, the law was not long in coming to Ponoka. By the latter months of 1901, a one-man detachment of the North-West Mounted Police had been established at the village in the form of Constable Vernon. However, this policeman did not remain very long—shortly after Christmas he departed for South Africa with other members of the force.

In the latter part of 1901, construction started on a new school and another bridge, while any improved farm lands in the district could be sold at a premium. In November, Henry Hertz, of Closter, Nebraska, purchased R. J. McCue's half section, located four miles south-east of the village, for the sum of \$2,800. Later in the month, hogs were reported to be in demand at \$6—which was fifty cents higher than prices being paid on the Wetaskiwin market.



The Battle River was well named. Many were the times before the advent of bridges, that the pioneers had a veritable battle on their hands in order to cross it. There are tales told of horses drowning or swimming; of wagon boxes loaded down with heavy rocks—and still washed away; of innumerable dunkings. Here is a typical victim of the river—an abandoned democrat. Probably the owner has gone for a length of rope...

The Fourth Year

During 1902, the settlers now firmly established and taking off their third or fourth crop, began to brag about the Ponoka district. And to back up their fabulous stories, farmers brought forth proof that they lived in the finest agricultural land in North America. N. A. Wiltse stated his oats had yielded 100 bushels to the acre and weighed 46 pounds to the bushel, while wheat yielded 40 bushels. A sample of rye from a second farm was 75 inches tall and had well filled heads. Another enthusiast brought in some grasses to Ponoka for display. He had timothy 52 inches high, brome grass 69 inches, Canada blue grass 45 inches, native brome grass 46 inches, and as an added feature, lettuce heads as large around as ordinary water pails. Not to be out-done, William Ledgerwood brought in a turnip which weighed one ounce less than 25 pounds. It had been grown on his farm four miles south-east of the village.

Among the businessmen who settled at Ponoka were Fairley and Walker, of Carberry, Manitoba, who leased McGillivray and Herriek's store for a bank; Dr. Memberry, a graduate of London Medical College, who joined Dr. Drinnan's practice for a short while; and Bennett and Armstrong's bank, which was under the direction of S. Barker, of Nebraska. The first requests for a grain elevator were made by the people of Ponoka during the year, but no immediate action was taken. A meeting also was called to study ways and means of establishing a creamery at Ponoka, but when this move was found to be unfeasible, a cream gathering station was organized.

As in most frontier areas, the early settlers were a gregarious people and pride in their "home" states still ran high. An indication of the strong ties was evidenced during the autumn of 1902, when former Nebraskans held their first annual reunion south-east of Ponoka in the "Nebraska settlement." Al-

We doubt that any oldtimer looking at this picture can help but recall nostalgic memories of his arrival in the new land. A freight car (from the United States) is parked on the siding at Ponoka. The year is 1903. Left to right are Fred Crook, Harry Crook, George Jackson, J. M. Crook, H. L. Crook and Bill Crook, at work unloading. Note the ox team, the wagon wheels, the plow handles, the chicken wire, the stove (on the wagon), the dining table (upside down so it won't be scratched)—and the dog and pen of rabbits!



though the weather was miserable and the roads bad, more than 300 persons turned up for the afternoon gathering.

Tragedy struck Ponoka early in the year when fire destroyed three prominent business houses. The blaze, believed to have been caused by faulty stovepipes, started in Matusch's store and soon spread to Huber's barber shop and on to Algar & Co. store and post office. When it was over, the fire had gutted all three buildings, causing more than \$16,000 damage. However, new stores soon arose over the ashes and before the year was out, Algar's was back in business.

Lumbering continued to be an important asset for the village, with Foulger and Rowley opening a camp at Pigeon Lake, Loewin and Company working on the Battle River, and E. W. Buck planning to take two million feet of lumber from the Battle River region for McKelvey and Blain. In all cases, logs could be floated downstream to Ponoka for milling.

By the end of the year, 476 persons had received the aid of Cook Myer's land guide services, while numerous other settlers had located their own homesteads or bought out established farmers.

The Fifth Year

Most of the settlers arriving in the Ponoka district were from the United States and by 1903 the drain on the American agricultural population had reached such proportions that the government was trying its utmost to keep its farmers from travelling across the 49th Parallel.

In March a resident of Ponoka stated: "New settlers are arriving constantly, but all bring the same story of woe that they got very short treatment over in Uncle Sam's domain. The old gent must be getting a little sore over losing so many of his sturdy sons and daughters. We hope the time will never come when he can get a foothold in this country."

But still the settlers came, mostly from Iowa, Nebraska and the Dakotas, while a few hailed from Oklahoma and Kansas.

In the village of Ponoka, the construction boom continued unabated. C. F. Wyers and R. K. Allan began building new stores, Fairfield and Warnock moved into their new place of business, Ward and Carroll opened a new harness firm, and the railway started construction of a large warehouse and an addition to the depot.

All this activity was, in the eyes of most Ponoka residents, a sign of the prosperous times ahead. So, with the future in mind, a meeting was called on June 1st, 1903, and a resolution was unanimously passed requesting the incorporation of Ponoka as a town. "The territory to be included in the proposed town," stated the resolution, "will be all of Section 4-43-25. The population of the village is at present 525 inhabitants and only 400 are required for incorporation of a town. Three years ago, the village of Ponoka consisted only of a log store, a log school, a log church, and a log boarding house. The residents of today should certainly congratulate themselves that the town has made such rapid strides in its progress."

There was no doubt that the progress had been phenomenal. In three years, Ponoka had grown from five log buildings to a business district which included: five general stores and one under construction, two hardware stores, a drygoods and clothing store, a drug store, two flour and feed stores, a confectionery store, five implement firms, four real estate offices, a pump works, two licensed hotels, three boarding houses, two livery stables, three banks, a Dominion land sub-office, a printing office and weekly newspaper, one school, one Methodist church, and a Presbyterian church under construction.

An average of 400 gallons of cream was being shipped weekly from the gathering station to the Wetaskiwin creamery and Robert Tyner and Edward R. Wilsman had made formal application for permission to construct a cream-

ery in Ponoka. The newly-organized Board of Trade considered that Ponoka was in an ideal situation to receive town status.

In June, 1903, formal application was made to the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories (including Alberta) for the incorporation. This official document was signed by Cook Myer as overseer and Eugene Rhian as village clerk.

The Sixth Year

"The Ponoka district continues to show a phenomenal improvement in the way of settlement and civilization," said the Edmonton Bulletin in January, 1904. "New settlers are arriving and the older settlers are making great improvements in the appearance of their farms."

Thus began Ponoka's historic year. It was full of hope and promise. Each day, the village expected to hear the proclamation from the Lieutenant-Governor that their request had been granted, and each day the population was increased. By late in January, Ponoka was described as a thriving settlement "with a population of over 600 and all the dignity of a full-fledged town."

By mid-summer, Clinton C. Reed, the new sub-agent for the Federal Government, stated that all the land in the Ponoka area had been taken up, and that no homesteads could be obtained within 40 miles west or 60 miles east of the village. New arrivals, as a result, were faced with the choice of attempting to purchase or rent established lands, or move on to other districts.

The people of Ponoka waited patiently for some action to be taken on their resolution, but the wheels of government were slow and unwieldy. On April 8th, 1904, a meeting was held in the village to discuss the next move for incorporation. A census was made and the information forwarded to the government. Another meeting was held at Reid's Hall on May 25, with Mr. J. S. Slater being named chairman and returning officer. Finally, on September 9th, all the decisions and statistics obtained at the meetings were given to the Deputy Attorney General for his approval. He in turn submitted his recommendations to the Executive Council on October 4th, requesting that Ponoka be incorporated as a town. This was agreed to by the minister on October 10th and the welcome news forwarded to the patient population of Ponoka.

The historic day for the populace came on October 15th, 1904, when Ponoka was declared a town by Order-in-Council. Frank L. Purdy, a local merchant, was appointed as returning officer, and nominations were accepted for the first elections. An intense interest was shown in the town's first official function, and when nominations were filed on November 1st, two men were in the running for the mayoralty, and eight for positions on the town council. J. D. McGillivray and F. M. Lee were the two contestants for the mayor's seat, while prospective councillors included Cook Myer, W. A. Brodie, F. M. Lee, W. J. Milne, R. W. McKinnell, W. R. Courtright, F. E. Algar and A. Reid.

After the elections, Mayor McGillivray and his town council began the solemn task of transacting the business of the West's newest incorporated town.

More than 100 years had passed since the first white man had seen the beautiful scenery of the Battle River. The pages of time had recorded the Indian battles, the missionaries' labors, the rebellion, the railroad, and the many other important events which had occurred in the life of the district.

Each had marked a beginning of a new era. And then, in the year 1904, came the greatest of all beginnings—Ponoka, as a town, began hesitantly to toddle along the proud pathway of progress. As the years passed, its step became firmer and steadier—the town had left its infancy. And today, as a fifty-year-old, Ponoka meets the world as a mature, yet still growing, thing—confident, proud, strong and alert. Fifty years have served to build a solid foundation for the future.

The Ponoka District

(Ponoka was built and has prospered by the many rural districts which lie around it. With the co-operation of district residents, we have compiled brief histories of most of these areas.)

* * * *

ASKER

The first pioneer in the Asker district was O. C. Ravnsborg, who came to Alberta from Oakes, North Dakota, in 1895. After spending a short time in the Wetaskiwin area, he moved to a homestead on the N.E. ¼, 2-43-23, where he built cabins for himself and his stock. Two years later, in 1896, he was joined by his brother, R. Ravnsborg and wife; the Andrew Vold family from Seattle, formerly from Oakes; and the Alce Woyen family.

In the autumn of 1898, more settlers arrived from Oakes, including the Timrod Wettre family, Gustave Kraft family, Emile Høybak family, O. O. Craft and Ole Oas. Also in this party were the Carl Paulsen family and the L. J. Nelson family, who took up residences near Wetaskiwin. The Paulsens later moved to Asker and the Nelsons to the Magic district west of Asker.

During the autumn of 1899, the Krefting family emigrated from Walsh County, N.D., settling near Wetaskiwin, until New Year's Day, 1900, when they moved to Asker. Their home later became the Asker post office. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Krefting had their home a short distance away.

As early as 1898, a meeting was held in an effort to organize a school district and correspondence was carried on with the Territorial Government in Regina. A charter was granted under the name of Smith's Grove S.D. No. 408, so named for an early rancher squatting on the shore of Samson Lake.

In 1899 a log house was purchased from a homesteader nearby who had tried and could not take the wild west. This building was moved to Section 14 by A. Vold and O. C. Ravnsborg, assisted by two lads, Roy and Nansen Vold, aged about eight and ten years at the time. During the autumn, the house was rebuilt by Henry, John, Olaf and Einar Krefting and made ready for use as a school. In July, 1900, Miss Katherine Carruthers came west from London, Ontario, and took charge of the first class of 14 pupils.

The district received its name on September 1st, 1900, when the Asker post office was opened. The name "Asker" is the plural of "ash" for "ash trees."

Almost all the elder pioneer residents of the new community were originally from Asker, Norway—home of Crown Prince Olav. When Ottawa officials informed the district it would receive weekly mail service from Ponoka, the residents were asked to select a name for the new post office. Thus the name "Asker" was introduced to Alberta. On the same day as the opening of Asker P.O., Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Krefting (postmaster), observed the district's first silver wedding anniversary. Asker P.O. was closed in 1916 when R.R. 1 was established out of Ponoka.

The elders of Asker community felt the need for recreation, with the result that a literary society was formed in 1900. With the goal of establishing a community hall, the society cut and sawed logs during the winter of 1900 and hauled the materials to a site on the school land. In the following summer the building was erected, to become the only centre of recreation for miles around. Many an oldtimer's tale could be told about the pleasant entertainment, concerts, bazaars and dances given at the old Asker Hall.

The first baptismal service was conducted at the Andrew Vold home in

1897 by Rev. Thuland, a retired minister living in the Lewisville district north of Samson Lake. In 1899, the head Evangelical Lutheran Church at Minneapolis sent a missionary, Rev. Wik, to Wetaskiwin to serve the frontier area. Services were conducted at the Krefting home every other month where Rev. Wik also held the first confirmation in 1901.

The community also was served by student Presbyterian ministers from Ponoka for three summers. These services were held in the school or the hall. The Lutheran Church organization meeting was held at the home of O. C. Ravensborg on July 8th, 1905, and the church was constructed in 1915.

A flour mill was built on O. C. Ravensborg's farm in 1911, and operated by Mr. Ravensborg, H. E. Krefting and Alec Woyen for a number of years. A. H. Ravensborg and J. W. Vold then moved the mill to Ponoka for a year where it was purchased by Mr. Bruen and moved to Bashaw.

The population of the Asker district was augmented by new settlers continually arriving. By 1904 the names of homes and families included: O. C. Ravensborg, Mr. and Mrs. R. Ravensborg, Mr. and Mrs. A. Ravensborg and family, Mr. and Mrs. C. Thorstad and family, Mr. and Mrs. A. Woyen and family, Mr. and Mrs. A. Vold and family, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Paulsen and family, Mrs. M. Wettre and family, Mr. and Mrs. A. Halvorsen and family, Mr. and Mrs. E. Hoybak and family, Mr. and Mrs. M. Anderson and family, Mrs. H. Woyen and sons, Hans Tolefson.

Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Krefting and family, Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Krefting and family, Mr. and Mrs. Ole Oas and family, Mr. and Mrs. O. Lovig, Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Dittberner, Capt. C. B. Phillips and sons, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas B. Phillips, Miss Emma Carruthers, Mr. and Mrs. E. Holifer and family, Robert Ramsey, Mr. and Mrs. John Holifer and family, Mr. and Mrs. W. Gregory, Mr. and Mrs. H. Edin and family, and J. Johanneson and son.

The first wedding was held at the Holifer home on June 26th, 1901, when E. K. Dittberner took Therese Holifer as his bride. The first white child born in the district was A. A. Vold, who arrived on May 4th, 1899.

In 1898 there was no direct road through to Ponoka, so in January, 1899 a band of pioneers made up of O. C. and R. Ravensborg, A. Vold, T. Wettre and C. Hoybak tried to blaze a trail straight west to Ponoka. At Nelson Lake, O. C. Ravensborg climbed the tallest tree to see if he could spot Ponoka. This tree remained as a landmark for many years.

Asker was the centre for the school fairs held in the 20's and 30's where wonderful exhibits and showmanship were displayed from schools at Water Glen, Calumet, Eureka, Concord, Magic, Climax and Asker. Good sports of various kinds also prevailed, and Asker still has the only ski run in the area where tournaments were held for many seasons.

The majority of early settlers were of Norse descent and the younger generation of citizens adhere to their ancestral heritage: "Love your flag and country, no matter what country's allegiance you adhere to, respect the land in which you live."

BISMARK

The first settlers in the area were Charley, Julius and August Gehrke who settled on their homesteads about 1900. The land pioneered by these brothers now is owned by C. Jensen, L. McClaffin, E. Tiltgen and Mrs. Hinz. Charley Gehrke also purchased a half section from the C.P.R. which he sold in the autumn of 1902 to C. R. Kirk.

It was on this land that the Bismark post office was opened by Mr. Kirk, who also operated a general store and stopping place for settlers living in the vast area to the west. Travelling by ox and horse teams, these settlers came from as far as Rimbey and often took a week to make the trip to Ponoka.

Mail for Bismark was at first brought in from Ferrybank but when a bridge was built across the Battle River, mail hauled from Ponoka to Bluff

Centre (now Bluffton) by Mr. B. F. Craig, was delivered to Bismark, Buckhorn and Springdale en route. This was a hazardous trip, and in one summer, Mr. Craig lost three horses in the flooded rivers. Early settlers, too, had to travel via Ferrybank and open and close 22 gates on each trip.

From 1902 to 1904, settlers poured into the district, due possibly to the efforts of Charley Gehrke. The pioneer was supposed to receive \$10 for each bona fide immigrant whom he settled in the district. Mr. Gehrke proved up on his homestead and later moved to Ponoka where he purchased the Alberta Hotel.

Among the early settlers were the Hemeyers, the Nagels, the Hagemanns the McFetridges, Gunthers, Kerbers, Cissells, Jacobus and others.

To serve the new settlers, a school district was organized in 1905 and Bismark School was constructed. The first teacher was Miss McClelland. The religious needs of the area were filled by the construction of a Lutheran church which had Mr. Grueber as its first minister. He also held services throughout other districts in the surrounding area.

A sawmill was erected on the Kirk place and operated by Mr. Converse, the father of Mrs. George Fink, Chesterwold. The mill provided much of the lumber required in the district.

Among the incidents and hardships of early pioneers is the tale of one settler who arrived in Ponoka with a family of six and funds totalling \$1.50. Undaunted, he built a 12x14 foot shed of poles, covered it with sod, and used it as a dwelling place until he could afford to build a house.

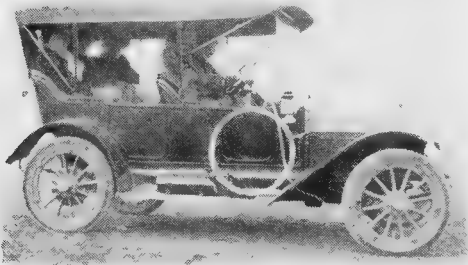
About the only one left of the adult group which settled in the Bismark district is Mrs. Kerber. The family drove by team and covered wagon from Oregon to settle in the area. Many children of the early pioneers also still reside in the the district.

SHARPHEAD

The Sharphead school was built in 1903 on property donated by George White, the original holder of the farm presently owned by the L. J. Auten family. Situated four miles west of Ponoka, the site was wonderfully well chosen, being on a height of land which commanded a view of all the surrounding district, and in particular the beautiful valley of the Battle River, a mile to the south.

The first school board included Tom Hutchinson, secretary; John Hagemann and D. A. Morrow. Miss Emma Hunter, who later became Mrs. Aaro Crawford, was first teacher. In that first year she planted trees which survived until very recently, and started a fund for the purchase of a piano which is still doing service in one of the county consolidated schools.

The district, the south-east corner of which lies two miles west of Ponoka, was an area of fourteen square miles, most of which was formerly a part of the Sharphead Indian reserve. In 1899 the Dominion Government opened it for purchase at from two to four dollars per acre. The sale was listed in mid-western United States papers and it was from this area, Iowa, Nebraska, North



One of the first automobiles in the country was this solid-tired beauty owned by W. A. Martin complete with all-draft ventilation and acetylene lamps.

and South Dakota and also Oregon that most of the people who purchased the reserve land came. It did not last long at the price, and was entirely taken up by the end of 1901.

Pioneers whose descendants still farm the original land include: W. T. "Tim" Russell, W. G. "Will" Cervený, D. A. "Dan" Morrow, John Hagemann, Evan Lloyd and Edward Elofson families.

A finer group of people never graced a community in any part of the world and they deserve special mention for the reason they came with the proper pioneer spirit to take the good with the bad and to persevere until all was good. Community spirit and good neighborliness was characteristic with all of them, and it was these traits coupled with their ability and ambition to build permanently, that wins them our respectful memories. "Tim" Russell was as full of the old Nick and as witty as any son of the "Ould Sod" from which his ancestors came, and is perhaps best remembered for this trait, but when work was the order of the day fun took secondary standing. His good wife was the willing servant of her family and all the neighborhood all the days of her life.

The nicest thing that can be said of any family is that visitors always feel perfectly at home. When boys of the neighborhood had a few hours to spare the "Will" Cervený home was always their rendezvous, and it was the atmosphere of friendliness and welcome which always prevailed that drew them.

People of Sharphead district have a special niche in their hearts for the memory of "Dan" Morrow. He was a teller of tales and singer of word songs par excellence, and a book of verse in which he set down his thoughts and recorded happenings in the neighborhood remains living proof of the deep affection he had for his neighbors. The kindly and gentle nature of his wife Winnie, complemented his own, and, as is natural, won for them full measure of esteem in return.

John Hagemann and Evan Lloyd were both small men in physical stature, but mighty in their ability of accomplishment. They settled within a half mile of each other on land overlooking the Battle River and carved out their farms from its wooded banks. Both took great pride in fine livestock, were superb stockmen, able to diagnose ailments, and quick to answer any call their neighbors might make upon them in case of animal sickness. Their helpmates complemented them in home and community life. And the characters of Edward Elofson and his wife, were mirrored in their sons Arthur and Lawrence; nothing was left to be desired. Mr. and Mrs. Elofson passed away on the farm upon which they settled.

The only surviving original land owner in Sharphead district who occupies the homestead upon which he filed in his youth is Lars Larsen. If it were written, Lars' life story would be ample proof of the reward the good earth of the district had in store for those who persevered and treated it right. His original homestead has increased to a considerable holding upon which his niece and nephew, Mr. and Mrs. Phil Gautier now are making a home for him.

Of those who came a little later, but who should be classed with the pioneers because their lifespan is interwoven with the formative years and threaded through to recent days is the Aaro Crawford family. Aaro came in 1904, and while not the original owner of the holdings upon which he settled, he proved to have had the traits essential to pioneering, and the record would not be complete without mention of them. He carved out his home, and left a memory which is bright in the thoughts of his old neighbors because it is founded on recollections of the community spirit which he always displayed.

Of those who came later, stayed, and left their mark, are the L. J. Auten family, the Charles Lees, the Mat Camerons, the Amad Kvestads, the Allan Crawfords, Soren Elgaards, the Anton Lux family and the Duncan McMillans.

SEAFIELD

Two of the first settlers who came to the district in the 1880's were John Barr and R. J. McCue. The former homesteaded on the S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 30, now owned by the Alberta Government, while the McCue homestead was located on the N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 23, Range 26. Later the stage barns were built on the McCue place, now owned by Misses Elizabeth and Lilly Poffenroth.

Other pioneers who followed included Jake Leek, who homesteaded the N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Range 20; west of him was Joe. Ledgerwood, while to the south was Nathaniel Ledgerwood and Mrs. Gray. Farther south was Jim Christie who gave the land for Seafield school.

The school was erected in 1902 and opened the following year with Miss Cameron as teacher. The school records for 1906 show George Page as chairman, Jim Christie as secretary, and Mr. Ratledge. The latter pioneer lived on the N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 6.

Other early settlers who lived in the district were the Smiths, the Rusyniaks, Pete and George Horn, Henry Dick, and the Hollykoffs. Another early settler who recently passed away was James Slater, who homesteaded the N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 9.

USONA—ANTHONY HILL

The first Anthony Hill School was built in 1904 on the corner of N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ 3-45-26 on land owned by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Osterland. Mr. Osterland came to the area in 1902, his wife and five children following the next year. During his active pioneer period in the district, Mr. Osterland was postmaster, mail carrier, store owner and homesteader.

The school served the northern part of this area, and, although it is now considered to be entirely within the Wetaskiwin division, it served more people from the Ponoka division fifty years ago than it did from Wetaskiwin.

Education was provided for the districts which now include Dennis, Anthony Hill, Reo, Poplar Forest and parts of Hazel Hill, Twin Creek and Bidingier. The first teacher at Anthony Hill School was Miss McLelland from Ontario who at times had as many as fifty pupils in her classes. However, in order to get permission to build the school, one child—Clifford Osterland—had to be enrolled before he was of legal school age.

Later when a larger school was built, Alfred Osterland bought the original school for use as a store and the Usona post office. Mrs. Osterland is believed to have chosen the name of Usona. She took the first letter of each of the words "United States of North America," making the name "U-s-o-n-a." This selection seemed quite appropriate as practically all the earliest settlers



The hunting was fabulous in the early days. Here's the result of an afternoon's sport—shotgun artist Martin Bednar with 36 assorted prairie chicken and ruffed grouse (partridge) and one rabbit.

in the area had come from points in the United States.

In 1926, Elof Nelson took over the job of postmaster, having the post office installed in his home. Mr. Nelson, who arrived in 1904, also had the unique distinction of having a feed grinder powered by a windmill. Neighbors would bring their grain in the afternoon to be put into a hopper where it was left all night to grind.

Religious services in the Usona district were held in the home of local residents. Rev. Frodin of Wetaskiwin was one of the first visiting ministers.

The first church in the district was built by the Methodists on John Holden's farm. Ottar Massing and Albert Mattern were christened there on the same day. As an added feature, a team of horses ran away and weren't found until three days later.

Early community entertainment consisted of picnics, house parties and house dances, with the music primarily being supplied by local artists on the violin and harmonica.

The idea that a hall should be constructed was suggested by Robert Kirkpatrick. The district already had \$100 collected from lunches served at community entertainments, and to this Charles Cunningham donated another \$100 while other district residents donated the cash from one acre of wheat.

William Hayhurst sold the district five acres of land selected by Mr. Lewis as a fairly central location. The hall was built by Ludwig Freeburg, of Buck Lake, and, at Mr. Hayhurst's suggestion, it was named Livenitte Hall. This was the name of a hall in Mr. Hayhurst's home town in Scotland. However, the majority of settlers felt that the name should be of a more local interest, and the name "Brooksona"—a combination of "Brooks" and "Usona"—was selected. This building still serves as a community hall for the area.

The first white child born in the district was Miss Alice Dick, now Mrs. Ralph Stinson, of Edmonton, who arrived in 1901. The first wedding saw Charlie Brown take Miss Nina Fish as his bride.

Original settlers of the area who are still living include: Mr. and Mrs. Elof Nelson, James Harris, James Dick, Mrs. Phil Palechek, Mrs. Bill Ferguson, Mrs. Fritz Bachor, and Emil Sisel, all of Ponoka; William Carlson, of Wetaskiwin; Jake Kramer, of Buck Lake; Mrs. Alfred Osterland, of Toronto; Mrs. Matilda Clark, of Jasper, and Mrs. Mary Kramer of Usona.

Settlers and landowners who came to the district between 1900 and 1904 include: Charles Dean, William Carlson, Len Courtwright, H. P. Smith, Elof Nelson, James Harris, William G. Reid, Jake Kramer, Coleman Butcher, Alfred Osterland, Mr. Robinson, Guy Lake, Oscar Perrson, Judge J. A. Jackson, Henry Kramer, W. H. Cook, Fred Mattern, Charles Cunningham, Carl Olsen, Ernest Erickson, Bill Ferguson, Homer Lincoln and John Hagemann.

Fritz Bachor, George Johnson, James Dick, Bert Hinkley, Silas Shrieve, John Holden, A. W. McCallum, Mr. Fish, Niel McCallum, Steve Fuller, Mr. Pasquitz, Charlie Brown, Mr. Dyer, Emil Sisel, William Mullins, Fred Warren, Mr. Cross, Albert Eklund, Mr. Windsor, Ase Lincoln, Mr. Vasburg, Charlie Erickson, Lintley Smith, John Mattern, Lambert Sisel, Mr. McBrian, Damon Shultz, Jim Coleson, Carl Mortenson, Mr. Payes, Tom Stretch, Mr. Torgersen, Cliff Stretch, Wynn Fuller, Mr. Dio, Phil Palechek, Mr. Couvert, E. L. Moc, Tom West, Bill Sweet, B. Muir and George Limbert.

Those arriving between 1905 and 1907 were: Ed. Cook, Mr. Wagner, George Clark, Mr. Thompson, John Goble, Mr. Sharpe, Marcelus Black, Mr. Fife, Dr. Liliedall and Joe Brolick.

WOLFVILLE

Wolfville School District took its first tangible shape on July 29, 1901, when local residents, all Nova Scotians, congregated to organize the first school board. A. D. Murphy was named chairman, with A. W. Archibald as

The first boys' basketball team in Ponoka was managed by Principal O. Williams, seen in the centre of the front row. The boys are, L to R—DeForest Nelson, Bryan Knudsen, Robert Dick, Addison Baker Bruce Stephens. Seated on either side of Mr. Williams are Leslie Morrow and Walter Jones.



secretary and auditor, George Taylor and J. P. Kent as trustees.

Early in 1902, Frank Gladwin was appointed as assessor and plans were made to erect a log school house. Situated on the N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 28-42-27, the school was built at a cost of \$344, with John Taylor acting as overseer and Fred McFetridge as timekeeper during construction. Man hour labor on the project was 15 cents, while a team earned 20 cents.

Completed in time for the season, the school opened on Sept. 2 for a four months' term, with Miss Speakman as teacher. She was a sister of Alfred Speakman, one-time M.L.A. for Red Deer. The district was unable to pay all of Miss Speakman's salary until 1904, and in that year the first two months were taught by Miss Emma Archibald and finished by Miss B. McLennan.

The next term was in 1908, with hit-and-miss schooling being continued until 1911 when a regular school term was observed. Some of the children attended schools at Bismark and Iowalta when the Wolfville school was not open.

In 1913 the school was moved to the N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 29-42-27 to a more central location and continued there until the autumn of 1919. It then moved again, this time to the Orange Hall until the new school was opened in 1922. This school was used until the centralized "Crestomere" school was opened in 1953.

The district first received its mail at Lacombe and whoever was going into town brought the mail for everyone. In 1906, a post office named Lochinvar was opened with A. W. Archibald as postmaster. This service continued until 1920 when a regular mail service from Lacombe was started.

The district had many hardships, one of the chief hazards being prairie fires which a high wind could carry through the tall grasses with more speed than a saddle horse.

There were pleasures and entertainment for the early pioneers and the district was fortunate in having more than its share of those who could handle a violin. The enjoyment of the settlers was demonstrated at their Literary Society and the house to house dance parties. The pioneers also had a great imagination, as shown by the young fellow who found a novel way of travelling by saddling an ox. He dismounted hurriedly one day, however, when he saw his lady friend approaching.

WATER GLEN

The year 1893 saw many arrivals in Water Glen—John Bergman and family, Elof Peterson and Olof Nelson, Anders Johnson and son Charles, the Lindbloom family, the John Tennis and the Albers families.

In 1895 came the Jonas Kallman family, Andrew Lydeens, Erik Dufva and Ab Dufva, the Nelson family, Peter Jonson, the Smiths and Tom Chal-

mers. The latter two were among the ranchers who were a great help to the early settlers, selling them cows and horses in return for labour, mostly at haying time. Later arrivals were the Phillips, John Bolch, the Rogers, the Groesbecks, the Humphries, Adam Scheurman, John Fuerst, the M. A. Fagens, Sam Flack, Geo. F. Root, all with their families, and others.

Starting from scratch, on virgin land, most of the pioneers had no money, and home to build, land to be put in shape for a little patch of grain, and a garden, and invariably many mouths to feed. But game, fish and wild fruit were plentiful, and the milk from their one cow was a godsend. Then after a year or two, there was a sack or two of precious wheat, threshed by a "tread mill" and the hand flail. This was hauled to Stratheona to be ground on a grist mill into flour; the journey took 3 to 4 days and was invariably taken in the winter time, camping out on the way in below zero weather was a matter of course. There was no bridge over the Battle River in the district in the early days so when the river was open, crossing was hazardous; the water would come under the wagon box, and rocks had to be piled in it to keep it from floating down the river. There were always little piles of rocks on either side of the river for this purpose. Flour and groceries were piled on the seat to keep them from getting wet.

With a tiny bit of flour, the pioneers had no oven in which to bake it. Mrs. Bergman was the only woman in the district who possessed a stove with an oven, and she kindly invited her neighbours to come and bake their bread in her oven. Carrying the raised dough a mile or two was no hardship, and "shanks mare" was the transportation.

Rosehips were plentiful, and when these were ripe, the children ate them to obtain necessary vitamins. There was very little sickness, perhaps a little toothache now and then, and if it became unbearable, there was always neighbour Humphrey to go to for an extraction. The victim brought along a couple

Here is a typical country general store of the early days. This is C. A. (Charlie) Johnson, standing behind the counter in his store at Water Glen, in the year 1911. Note the gas lamp, the pails of corn syrup, Blue Ribbon spices, Japan tea, the scales. On the counter are half a dozen tins of Copenhagen snuff.



of strong men to hold him down while the old man got to work with a pair of pliers. Sometimes it happened that the wrong tooth was pulled, but the toothache was gone, so what matter?

In 1895 a terrific prairie fire passed over the country all the way from Wetaskiwin to Buffalo Lake, and did untold damage. People in Water Glen barely managed to save the houses.

In 1896, only three years after the first group had arrived, a ladies' aid was organized to work for church interests; a Sunday school was established with Bergman and Lyden as instructors; a choir organized with Mr. Bredenberg as leader. Mrs. Pearson had an old organ which was of great help, and a Literary Society was organized, which brought old and young together.

Mrs. Pearson had acquired a few chickens, and while waiting for the chicken house to be built, the flock was housed in the attic. One evening, during a service (lay preachers would hold services in the different homes) "chanticleer" suddenly joined in the singing, which naturally brought giggles from the small fry.

In 1898 the first congregation was organized—the Swedish Lutheran Svea congregation—and in 1899 a school district called "Fair" was established. On June 21st, 1899, the first annual meeting was held, Nels Johnson being elected secretary, while the two trustees were Jonas Kallman and Andrew Lydeen, all elected by acclamation. At this meeting, it was decided to purchase a log house from Christian Sigalet for \$50, and by July 1st school was opened with Miss Margaret T. Carruthers of Wetaskiwin, as teacher. This school house served only for four years, when in 1903 the present school house was built.

The need of a place for recreation was felt, and in about 1900 the Svea folk joined with the Asker people in building the first Asker Hall. About 1904, a Farmers' Club was formed, with the Water Glen and the Manfred folk joining forces in the social organization. A gun club was later organized in which M. A. Fagen and many from Ponoka took a great interest. This gun club competed in many larger centres and brought home many trophies. The baseball club had been going for a long time before this, and there was horse-shoe pitching and croquet for other amusements. A strong football team was organized in 1916.

In 1902-3 a general store was opened by Messrs Kallman and C. A. Johnson, later taken over by C. A. Johnson. For years, Asker was the nearest post office, but about 1907 the Water Glen post office was opened and remained in operation until July 1947, when the rural route was extended. Chas. A. Johnson was the postmaster until then. The first car in the district, an Overland, was owned by C. Johnson.

In 1915 Water Glen built their "Social and Educational Club." This name was not easy to live up to. When Mrs. G. F. Root, and Mrs. C. A. Johnson became members of the school board, school fairs were organized and carried on for many years, with all surrounding schools taking part. Under the able tutelage of the teacher, Mrs. J. W. Bolch, the Water Glen school won six diplomas for the best exhibits.

The first frame house in Ponoka was built by W. L. Courtright. And it is still standing although if you didn't know just where it might be hard to guess. With a coat of stucco and an addition this house has become the office of Ponoka Shoe Clinic and accountant W. C. McIntosh. It is located on the north side of 51st Ave., between Crandall's Radio Service and Como Brothers.



BROOKS (DENNIS)

The Brooks district is made up of the area surrounding Brooks School, which was built in 1902. This name, however, caused considerable mail mix-ups with the Town of Brooks in southern Alberta, so a rather unique method of clearing up this confusion was found.

In or near the Town of Brooks there was a school named Dennis, so the names of the two schools were exchanged, putting the Brooks School in the vicinity of the Town of Brooks, and the Dennis School in the Ponoka division.

The land on which the Dennis (formerly Brooks) school was built was donated by James Dick. This was a free gift of land with one stipulation—that the building would be used not only as a school but also as a church for as long as the district needed it as a place of worship. A number of attempts were made to try to stop it being used as a church but this was never accomplished.

Now, for several years, the children in the district have attended Ponoka school via buses. The building has been the property of the Dennis Baptist congregation and is known as Dennis Baptist Church.

The first teacher in the school was William Grant. The first minister to hold services there was Rev. John Mair of the Presbyterian Church, while the first Baptist minister was Rev. Pengelly.

CALUMET

The Calumet district received its name from two early settlers—A. Bergquist and A. Anderson—who came to the area from Calumet, Mich., in 1902.

Most of the homesteads were taken in 1903 and 1904 with most of the settlers being Scandinavians and Hungarians who get along splendidly. To meet the educational needs of the settlers, a school district was formed in 1905 with the school board consisting of Mr. Bergquist, Mr. Johnsen, Mr. Stemo, and E. Heath as secretary.

The school was built in 1906 and remained open for four months during the summer of that year. Miss Agnes Mills (now Mrs. Maxin, of Kelowna, B.C.) was the first teacher, riding horseback four miles morning and evening for classes. In the following year the school opened in March with Miss Currie as teacher for six months. From that date on, however, a regular school term was held.

In the summer of 1911, twenty minutes after the school closed, a cyclone came from the south-west and lifted the building over a woodpile 4 feet high leaving the floor twenty feet from its original site and the remainder broken into small bits and scattered 300 feet away.

A new school was built in the winter of 1911-12, with the ratepayers supporting two debentures and still able to carry on with yearly classes for their children. The rate was nine mills on low assessment.

Like most of the other districts, Calumet could boast of no roads but was fortunate to have the Hobbema-Buffalo Lake Indian Trail circling around sloughs and hills through the district. This made the distance to Ponoka close to 30 miles instead of today's 18.

CONCORD

The first three families in the district who took up residence in 1900 were Arthur Sayers who settled on the S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 34-41-24, H. Hosimer on N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ 4-42-24, and Mr. Stone on N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 10-42-24.

During the following year, most of the homestead land was taken in the district and by 1902 the population was large enough to warrant the formation of a school district. The first school board was made up of S. W. McCaughey, A. Wiancko, and G. Malehow. The first teacher was Miss Robertson

who taught for only a day. A minister named Bradley then filled in until Mr. Miller came to teach. The school was situated on W. A. Stewart's homestead on the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ 10-42-24.

The Improvement District of Concord was organized in May, 1904 with Gustave Malchow serving as the first councillor for the remainder of the year. At the elections in January, 1905, P. R. Stewart was chosen for the position, which he held for the next thirteen years.

In 1905, the people of Concord district built the Earlville Provincial Creamery on the S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ 1-42-24, to become one of the first rural creameries in the province. The directors were A. C. Hare, chairman; W. W. Batson, secretary; H. Krefting, W. Orsher, P. R. Stewart, S. W. McCaughey and G. Malchow. Buttermaker at the creamery was Malcolm Campbell. This plant operated until 1910.

One of the families which arrived in 1901 was that of Frank Heath. A son Earl, started a store on his father's homestead on the N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 12-42-24, which became known as the Earlville store and post office. Not far away, on the S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 13-42-24, John Brown opened a harness shop where the Baptist Church now stands.

The first church service in the district was held in the A. Wianeko home, the pastor being Rev. T. P. Perrey, brother of E. Perrey of the Rutherford district.

Another of the Concord oldtimers whom we might mention was Mr. William Parks who came with his family in 1901. He was the only man in the district who ever saw that great Indian, Chief Sitting Bull of the Sioux tribe.

The first bride in the Concord area was Miss Susan Stewart, who became Mrs. M. A. Onesto. The first white child born was Jean Morin, now Mrs. F. Coxon who lives in British Columbia.

In the pioneer days, entertainment was mostly self made. Many of the early settlers would take their lunches to the Chain Lakes for a day's fishing or perhaps go chicken hunting—both for sport and the meat. Fish and wild game were plentiful in those days.

Baseball was a popular sport in the Concord area, the first team consisting of the following: Charlie Owens, Charlie Stewart, Will Holder, Will Stewart, Fred Howard, Harry Glaznar, John Stewart, Albert Wianeko, Glen McCaughey and Ira Edwards.

There are five oldtimers still living in the Concord area who arrived before 1904. These are Miss Grace Wianeko, George Wianeko, Glen McCaughey, Fred Howard and Charlie Owens.

LUNDGREN

The first settlers arrived in what is now known as the Lundgren District in 1900. Among them were Dwight Osborne, Charlie Bishop, Mrs. Hall and her family, and the Deuel boys.

In 1901, Jack Lee, his wife, and father-in-law, John Mussen, arrived from Nebraska. They came by covered wagon to Portal, then shipped by train to Ponoka, and it took them two days to get out to their homestead. They have had 18 children, 13 of whom are still living, and have 42 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. They have lived continuously on their farm since 1901, and are probably the only couple in the whole Ponoka district to have done that. In 1950 they celebrated their golden wedding. Both have been active in community affairs, Mrs. Lee being a charter member of the Alberta W.I. (1913) while Mr. Lee has served on councils, school boards, and the U.F. A.

Mr. and Mrs. Billy Hann and son, Harry arrived from England in 1902. Other very early settlers were the Chappells, Hunts, Gherkes, Gunthers, Edingers, Boyds, Lugstens and Zackarys. The Hunt family homesteaded where Ray Graham now lives, and are most remembered for the tremendous picnic

they threw for all the neighbors when they left for the States in 1912.

Ray Graham came in 1917 from Oklahoma via covered wagon. Two years later Rowe Luce arrived from Montana, returned to bring back a bride, and they have lived on their farm for more than thirty years. In 1919 the Crichtons moved to their present abode, having bought the farm from Mr. Frisch. In the 20's came the McDowells, Joe Friestad and Mrs. Andrew Kirkpatrick.

By 1913, the need had arisen for a school, so the district was organized, and the school built by Bill Bates, of Home Glen. The story goes that Mr. Lundgren, a bachelor living on the farm now owned by Henry Kristensen, opposed the idea, thinking it would raise his taxes, but when a fun-loving neighbour sent in his name, it was the one chosen for the district.

Mrs. Sim Deuel was the first teacher. First board members were Jack Lee, Swen Johnson and Hod Pattie.

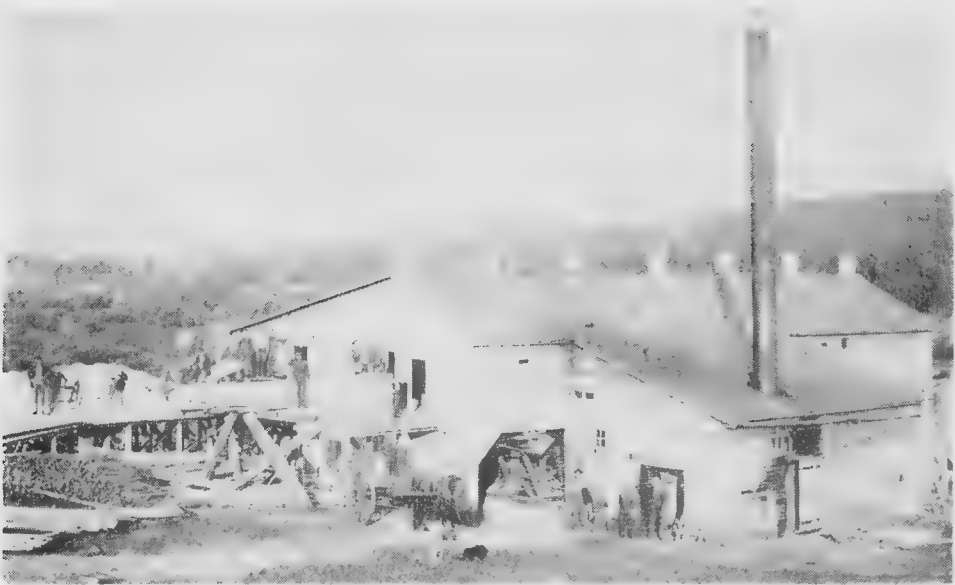
The name of the district is misleading. One of the early teachers, Caroline Olufson, a Norwegian girl from Edberg, thought she was coming to a Scandinavian settlement, and was quite surprised to find that Mr. Lundgren was the only Scandinavian here. However, she seemed to take kindly to other nationalities. At the end of her first term, she married Will Hall, and took him back to Edberg with her.

The years have brought many changes. In the early days, the residents had to go to the little country post office at Bismark for their mail. Then came the rural route to the corner south of Bresee's, and now for many years, the mail has been brought right through the district. For the past two years most residents have been enjoying the conveniences of Calgary Power. And progress still is on the march!

As of last September, the poor old school stands empty on its lonely corner and no longer does its yard echo to the shouts of happy, carefree youngsters. A modern bus now picks them up and conveys them to the equally modern new school at Crestomere.



By 1907 - 1908 the steam-power tractor was making its name in the countryside. Weighing many tons and moving on four-foot-wide steel wheels, the machines of this type could pull tremendous loads. W. R. Courtright is in the buggy, while A. Bittner stands with his men on the engine. One or two of these steamers are still about the countryside; some even say they will still run.



Familiar sights at Ponoka in the early years were the sawmills. This is the A. B. Rowley mill which was built on river flats at the north end of town in 1904. Spruce and pine logs were driven down the river from the timber stands at Pigeon Lake. The logs averaged 16 inches to two feet in diameter. This mill could cut 20,000 or more board feet a day. It was powered by a steam boiler fired by Charles Malcher. The head sawyer was Ed. Stephens. Saw setter was W. L. McCaughey; Edgar Williams, Sr., was the edger. Note the water barrels on the roof, kept filled in case of fire. This mill was moved to Pigeon Lake in 1907, where it worked for many years.

ARBOR PARK SCHOOL DIVISION No. 515

James Aylwin was the first settler in the Arbor Park District, coming from Quebec the year the C.P.R. reached Calgary. He opened the first post-office in the Ponoka district and called it Holbrooke. The land was not surveyed at that time. He began farming with seed secured at Edmonton. Labor was 25 cents a day and board.

In 1897 two homesteaders filed on land in Section 28, and lived there that winter but next spring left for the Yukon goldfields. Other Klondykers wintered in the district, cutting hay for their horses on Section 5.

In 1899 the settlers petitioned the Council of Public Instruction, Regina, to set up the Holbrooke School District. At the first school meeting the name was changed to Wiltze School District, in honor of the Wiltze brothers on Section 28. The new district was No. 515 in Alberta, Ponoka being No. 429.

J. E. Youmans, Ponoka school teacher, was engaged to do the writing and correspondence re erecting the School District and issuing debentures. By this means \$400.00 was borrowed from the Merchant's Bank of Edmonton. The new school was built by W. F. Wyer for \$325.00, and Chris Nobel the first teacher, was hired at \$40 a month. Taxes were collected for 1900, but not on the present scale. The Hudson's Bay Co. paid \$15.20 tax on a half section which is taxed \$218.28 for school purposes in 1954. There was competition among the districts being formed and the Brooks District got the other half of the section. The Government grants for 1900 were \$212.00.

Supplies for the first year came from Canada Drug and Book Co., Regina, the Ponoka Co-Operative, F. E. Algar, and S. O'Brien. The treasurer was paid \$6.00. Eugene Rhian, founder of the Ponoka Herald, audited the books.

At the annual meetings the secret ballot was unknown. Each voter's name and the candidate he supported were entered in the minute book.

Money to pay the teacher was borrowed at 10 percent. In 1903 the trustees were charged with extravagance when they raised the taxes to 6 cents per acre.

The Wiltze families moved away, and in 1904, the name of the district was changed to Arbor Park. In that year Mr. W. A. Saunders was engaged to teach the school with the understanding that if he wished to quit before the term expired he must furnish a substitute qualified to teach. The school was too full, because of outside pupils who had no roads to their own school. Twenty-two new double seats were bought that spring. Next year the ratepayers turned down a by-law to borrow \$600.00 to enlarge the school.

In 1907 the ratepayers opposed the "shortening of the school year from 210 to 200 days as is being demanded by the teachers of Alberta." Tax arrears were such a problem a ten percent penalty was demanded. Remodeling was carried out a few years later and the windows all put on one side. A barn was built with donated labor.

A pay as you go policy was adopted and a new school built in 1926 was paid for without borrowing.

The large unit came and swallowed up the local district and buses take the children to Ponoka. Now in 1954 all the buildings are gone from the school site.

The local community centre is now a thing of the past. For many years Arbor Park men and women took a very active part in the U.F.A. and U.F. W.A. and the organization of the farm Co-ops.

Most of the farms have changed hands, some of them many times. Of those on the 1900 tax roll, Mr. Jacob Beck is the only one left at Ponoka. Others who came later and their descendants are still here. Many are better than average farmers. The district has furnished leaders in politics, business and professions for Ponoka, for Alberta, and many distant places.

THE SOUTHEAST COUNTRY

The first settlement of any sizable block of people from one particular place was the Nebraska Settlement in the late summer of 1900. The previous year a Mr. Robert Ferguson had come in from Nebraska to look over the country; he was so pleased with what he saw that he returned to that State, and as a result a large number of his friends and neighbours decided to move en masse to Alberta. This they did in the summer of 1900. They drove in covered wagons as far as the Canadian border where they were met by a special immigrant train and brought up to Lacombe.

The land chosen was just S.E. of Chain Lakes. When the settlers arrived there, the land was mostly covered with willow scrub and trees, not a house or building in sight. Today it is one of the finest and most prosperous districts in the province. Of the original settlers the only ones still living at this date are Mr. and Mrs. Tommy Harris who are living retired in Tees.

The Ferguson family are the only ones of the original settlers remaining; they still own and farm their ancestors' first homestead as well as a large acreage of first-class farm land. Mr. Ferguson's youngest son, Phil, who was born in this country and three fine grandsons, all of whom are farmers, are the only ones left of the original group, and it is to be hoped the name never dies out in the community, for I am sure that would be the founder's wish.

Although these settlers unloaded at Lacombe they soon found their way to Ponoka; it was nearer and the roads or trails were better and they made that their trading centre. The Nebraska School was built in 1902, just two years after the settlers arrived. Rutherford School was not built till 1907.

The S.E. part of Twp. 41, Rge. 23 was settled in 1901 and 1902 by the Gardner family and Crown Brothers, from Wisconsin, the Weatherill family and Coursers from Dakota, and E. E. Malott, of Ontario. The northern part of

the township was settled at the same time by Henry Sagers, David Walker and the Perry family. There were others who merely homesteaded but didn't stay long. However, the above mentioned families all have descendants residing in the community and always have and still take an active part in everything pertaining to community welfare. Last year they purchased the Rutherford school in order to retain it as a community centre.

The first settler in what is now known as the Rutherford District was Ed. Lorenz who filed on the N.W. Sec 42-24 in 1899; his brother, Charlie who survived him still lives on the place. Some years after this the MacLeans, from Kansas purchased Section 5 and remained in the district for many years. The two oldest sons are still in adjoining communities. Another who took an active part in the district affairs was the late A. C. Hare. However, after his death the property was sold and in that way the family were lost to the community.

A brother of his, Walter Hare, homesteaded the S.W. 6-42-23. However, he died before he completed his homestead duties, and as there was no cemetery nearer than Ponoka, he was buried on his own homestead. The settlers then secured title to an acre of ground on which the grave was situated, and organized a cemetery board, and today most of the original settlers rest there and their descendants show their respect by keeping the grounds neat and tidy.

One of the most outstanding achievements of the pioneers of the Eastern District of Ponoka was the building of a co-operative creamery in 1905 on the corner of S.E. Sec. 1-42-24, although just about that time a private creamery was started in Ponoka. This creamery which was managed by the farmers under the competent supervision of the dairy commissioner, Mr. Marker, was a real success for about seven or eight years. However, the membership concluded it was too far out from town to be operated successfully and it was closed down. The machinery and the building were sold and the money divided up among the shareholders. It was a great boon to the settlers. Hitherto, anyone making butter had to take it in and trade it out at the stores, and sometimes the price was discouraging.

From the storekeepers' viewpoint butter was a headache, there was such a variation in quality; at times it was hard to find a market for some of it. The merchants welcomed the idea of erecting a creamery; in fact it was a boon to all parties. There was another angle to this which reached much farther than Ponoka and that was a wave of selling cream separators. Everybody was in the market for one and the local agents did a rushing business. They could hardly meet the demands. It was good for the manufacturers and their employees far away in the East or down in the States which goes to show that when farmers are prosperous other businesses get the benefit of it and that right away.

It would hardly be right to close out this short sketch of the Earlville



Four real oldtimers . . . we have the names of three of them, but the hairy fellow second from the left remains unidentified, despite considerable searching. Left to right: Hans Larsen, Cook Myer and James Earl. The picture was taken in front of the livery barn on Railway Street.



This picture was taken exactly 50 years ago—just before the Town of Ponoka was incorporated. Pictured are many of the businessmen who had a hand in achieving town status for the new community. Front row, L to R—T. J. West, C. D. Algar, Cook Myer, W. R. Courtright, Mr. Ball, Dr. A Drinnan. Second row—Mr. Patchett, W. Kennedy, J. F. Purdy, A. Fairfield, Mr. Wyers, Jim Earl, W. J. O'Brien. Third row—A. Spackman, J. R. McCue, F. M. Lee, G. Sellars, R. Slater, Wes Warnoch, Mr. Bird, Mr. Dodd, W. D. Pitcairn. Rear—J. P. Horn, A. Reid, J. Stoutenburg.

Creamery without mentioning the annual picnic which was held every July just across the road from the creamery. It was undoubtedly the most outstanding event of the summer, huge crowds attended and everyone had a good time, and as far as my memory goes we always had perfect weather. I am sure that many old timers and some not so old will recall with pleasure those gala days of long ago.

When the first Government of Alberta launched their province-wide program of rural phones there were some who strongly criticized the move. Although it did not turn out to be a great financial success, yet it was a boon to the rural population and made life considerably brighter for many individuals and families. Taking a long view of the matter, it paid, for the men and women who were toiling so hard to develop the country, were entitled to a few of the amenities of life. I cannot say just when the districts nearer town got phone service, but out our way we got ours in 1910 and also rural mail delivery about that time.

In view of the disastrous hail storms that have swept over wide areas of this province we can recall our first one on August 17th, 1905. Only slight damage was done in Eastside district but in Concord districts and right through to Buffalo Lake everything was wiped out. It was the largest acreage that people had seeded to date and it was a beautiful crop and unusually well advanced for that time of the year. It was a hard matter for many a farmer to finance the year and a hard job to finance the seed the next spring.

HISTORY OF GRANDMEADOW SCHOOL DISTRICT

It was in the fall of 1899 that brothers Arthur and James Holben came to the district from Magnola, Iowa, to look the country over. They returned that same year and in the spring of 1900, Arthur and his son Herb emigrated to this district to settle on the N.E. quarter of 27; Mrs. Holben and family following in the spring of 1901. This farm was sold to Jim Purnell, and is now owned by Walter Gee.

The same spring of 1901, James Holben and family settled on the N.E. quarter of 26, where today only skeleton remains of buildings may be seen across from Gee's gravel pit.

The only other family living west in the district in 1901 were the Ledgerwoods.

Quite an influx of settlers occurred in 1901. Will Gee and family settled on the S.E. quarter of section 33 across from the school. A family named Carsons settled on what is now the Fleming place, resided on by Carl Stuart and family. Louis Fleming bought this farm, settling there with his family in 1903. Again in 1901, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Crawford took up residence on the farm now owned by Evan Thomas, while Frank's father and family, Mr. A. J. Crawford settled across the road.

The big slough to the east was then named Mapie Leaf Lake, providing much winter enjoyment to the early pioneers. Ed. Williams and family, too, came to the district pioneering on the farm, now resided on by Lyn Kempf, in 1901. That same year Mr. G. Goodman settled on the south half of Section 34, the farmsite being just west, below the hill from Holben's. Marion Hopper lived from 1901 to 1907 with his family across the road north from the present John Erese place.

It is said that in the summer of 1901, the late Mr. C. C. Reed, a real estate agent from Ponoka paid a visit to the A. Holben farm. In the course of conversation he suggested that the Holbens call their farm Grand Meadow Ranch. So it was that when Mr. Holben donated the land for a school, it was named Grand Meadow, in honor of the donor. The school, Grand Meadow No. 671, was built in the fall of 1902, and began that same year, the first teacher being a Miss Pearce. At the close of the first term, June 1903, Miss Pearce, pupils and members of the community held a picnic by the river on Walter Gee's farm.

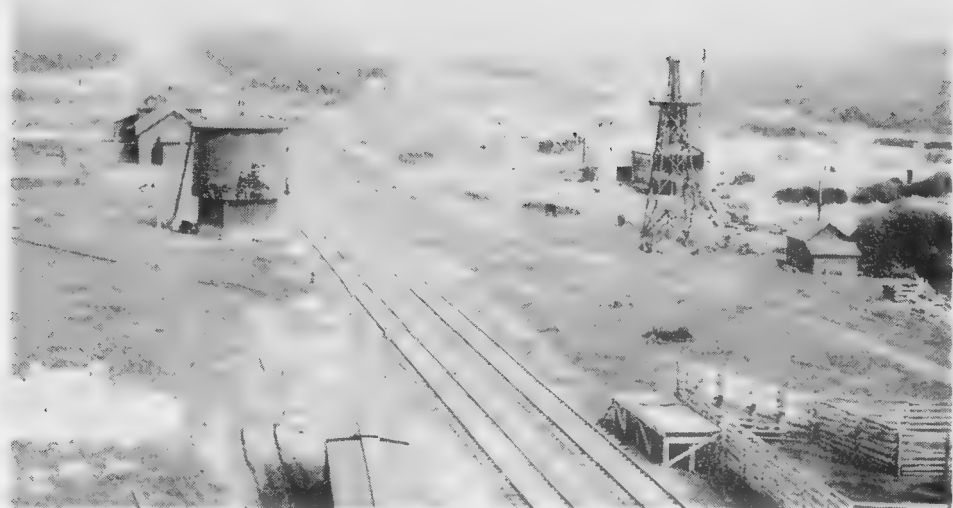
The second teacher was Miss Agnes Brady, followed by Miss Lyons. Water was dipped from a spring on a knoll some distance to the north, for the children's use until some time in the twenties when a well was drilled.

In the year 1905, a fond father gave his daughter, little Grace Crawford, a pet to raise. Nothing unusual in that, but this pet was a very fat Berkshire pig and was dubbed by its owner a name in honor of Alberta's new status as a province—a name which pedigreed pigs of today might well envy—Alberta Provincial!

Grand Meadow school was also used as a centre of worship from 1903 to 1912 by the Methodist congregation. Church was held every two weeks, the minister coming out from Ponoka to hold services. A Mr. Slater began Sunday school in 1903, while Rev. Mr. Parry who came to Ponoka in 1901, began holding services in the school in 1903.

Interesting is the fact that part of the district was once an Indian reserve and Methodist mission, and that the first Ponoka school was moved from this mission. The tribe, known as the Stony Indians, were badly hit by a smallpox epidemic, and what remained of the tribe moved to the Battle Lake area before 1900. Today a dug-out and a graveyard may be seen on the Albert Matejka farm. Calgary Power employees, putting through the power line from Calgary to Edmonton in 1951, were quite alarmed to learn that the bones they had dug up were those of humans!

Sad to say, today nothing of the old school is left, not even a landmark. A



The year was 1905 when an intrepid photographer climbed an elevator to capture this picture. Note the windmill used to pump water for the trains, the stockyards, the station, and the heavy woods. Lining the river bank as far as the eye can see are lumber piles. The closer mill is that of Blain-McKelvey sawmill, while in the distance can be seen the A. B. Rowley sawmill. The black dots to the left of the windmill are grazing cows.

fire believed to have been caused by an overheated stove destroyed the school in its entirety one evening in the fall of 1948. The last teacher, Mrs. Maud Wright finished the term teaching in Ponoka, while the pupils were transported to town by bus.

WOOD RIVER

The history of the district began when L. J. Nelson filed on a homestead north of Nelson Lake and then, in 1900, moved there with his family of seven. In the spring of the same year, the Petersons came from Wisconsin, and, after settling in the Eastside district for a year, they moved to a homestead east of the Nelsons.

Other pioneers who arrived in 1900 were John H. Jones, an American bachelor; Mr. and Mrs. Carl Morris and two daughters; Owen Williams, another bachelor; the Millburn family which came from Nebraska with two wagons, a daughter driving one of the outfits; George Taylor and family from Ontario; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Schierer and family from Nebraska; Mr. and Mrs. John Lyons and family; Albert Legge and W. N. Story, two bachelors from Ontario.

A movement, headed by Andrew Harper, founded a Welsh Sunday school during the summer of 1902, with classes being held in the partially completed barn of William James. Rev. D. L. Hughes, who officiated at marriages, baptisms and funerals, opened the Sunday school but did not preach to any extent because of a throat condition.

The James' place was centrally located and became a popular meeting place for the early settlers. In the winter of 1902-03, English worship services were held in the E. K. Bullock home, with Mr. Bradley as minister.

During 1903 a school house was built, mostly by volunteer labor, with

Bob Bunn as chief carpenter. The building was erected on the south-east corner of the Peterson place. First members of the school board were L. J. Nelson, E. J. Peterson and W. M. James, secretary. Later, Fred Bullock succeeded.

The first teacher was Mrs. Ed. Owens, who rode nearly four miles to classes, often bringing her young son, Sheldon. Other early teachers were A. B. Smith, Miss Sinclair, Miss Topp, F. C. Banfield, Miss McKenzie, Miss Porter and Owen Williams. The name "Magic" was chosen for the new school district.

Settlers arriving in the Wood River district in 1901 were: the E. K. Bullocks, who had spent a short while in Water Glen before settling near the Petersons; his son, F. J. Bullock and family; the Martin family; Bob Bunn, an American carpenter; Rev. D. L. Hughes and family; Hugh H. Jones; Will T. Jones and family; William James; Frank S. James; Griff Davies and Owen Price—the latter not staying.

Those arriving in the Eureka district were the Hamiltons, Ed. Owens and family, and Griff P. Jones.

In 1902, new settlers included: T. C. Morris and family; Andrew Harper and family; the Jenkins family; John Lewis family; Will H. Jones who stayed only about two years; the family of William James; Tom Owens and family who settled in the Climax district; Ed. James; John Young; John MacDougall and family, a plasterer and bricklayer by trade; Mr. and Mrs. John Griffiths and a family of three girls—this family selling out to Will Reese Jones in about 1906; Levi Davies joined by his wife two years later, and Mr. and Mrs. Evan Davies.

The John W. James family arrived early in 1903 and lived on the Ed. James' place. In 1904 a Negro family named Thompson secured a homestead south of Bunn's place and lived there for three years. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson had been slaves in their younger days in the United States. Mr. Thompson froze to death early in 1907 and his widow and daughter moved to Ponoka.

In 1905, Richard C. Jones, a bachelor, arrived from Wales. O. G. Davies and Evan R. Evans bought the Bunn place in 1906, selling out the same year to H. F. Davies, who had come from Washington with Will Reese Jones. Later in the year, Mr. Davies returned to Wales where he married and returned to Wood River with his bride in 1907. Other arrivals in 1906 were John Hughes and Richard G. Jones.

In 1907, Thomas Hughes and son, Foulkes, arrived and set up a store in Bunn's hall until they purchased land for their own store from W. M. James. A butcher by trade, Mr. Hughes also sold meat.

The W. F. Hughes family arrived from Minnesota in 1909, followed the next year by the H. T. Jones family, John Owen, John R. Jones, W. W. Griffith, from California; Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Jones, with sons Luther and Walter from Poultney, Vermont.

In 1911 a family of five arrived in the district from Magrath: They were Mr. and Mrs. William H. Roberts, their daughter Maggie and sons William and Hugh. The family moved to the Watt farm south of the township line where Mr. Roberts died in 1914. The boys carried on farming. In 1934 Mr. Hugh Roberts moved to Ponoka, was elected mayor in 1953, and has the honour of being mayor during the celebration of the 50th anniversary.

Church was established in the school house as soon as possible, with Welsh Sunday school being held in the afternoon and English worship services in the evening. The church congregation was registered as the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church of Magic. Early ministers included Revs. Fry, Findlay, Harding, O'Shay, Lincoln, Burwash and Parry. In the spring of 1905, T. E. Jeffreys came as a young man from Wales and preached in Welsh and English. He was ordained in Minnesota in 1909.

Bob Bunn erected a hall on his place in about 1903, but few dances were held there. The social life of the district revolved about the little school house

where church, school and nearly all community affairs were held. Basket socials and programs were very popular, the fair sex being very adept in the art of basket making.

W. N. Story petitioned for a post office in 1903 and obtained results when an office was opened in the home of F. J. Bullock on August 1st. The name "Wood River" was chosen in memory of the Bullocks' home town in Nebraska. E. J. Peterson carried the mail from Ponoka to Wood River from 1905 to 1912, also serving other points including Dorenlee, Meeting Creek and Ferry Point. The round trip of 64 miles was made twice a week. Fred Bullock relayed the mail from Wood River to Asker and Water Glen.

During the winter of 1902-3, a steam operated sawmill, operated by Tait Cook on the Tom Watt place, sawed lumber for the settlers. They were permitted to cut certain amounts of saw logs, building logs and construction rails from any available source on school lands or unclaimed homesteads. In 1905, Dickau brothers and Bittner operated a sawmill on the Henry Nelson homestead near the present Wood River Hall.

In the field of sports, soccer football made its appearance in the district in about 1908, with E. F. Hughes as one of the chief promoters. The sport proved very popular and many trophies were won over the years by the Wood River teams.

EASTSIDE

The first man to file on a homestead was Samuel B. Lucas, a pioneer of Alberta who settled in the district in 1893. There were seven children in the Lucas family: Emma (Mrs. H. Lott); William (who married Eleanor Robinson); Howard (who married Maude Morris); Harry, who died at 14; Mary (Mrs. G. P. Ferguson); Clara (Mrs. John Caldwell); and Judy (Mrs. D. W. Malin).

From 1899 to 1902, new residents swarmed into the area. The name Swan Lake was at first chosen, but was changed to Eastside when it was found another Alberta district was already named Swan Lake.

The road to the district from Ponoka was nothing more than a trail which went around the north end of the muskeg area, and swung back to a southerly direction again. In 1901 a road was built across the muskeg under the dir-



Many years ago the Indians of the district had not adopted western dress to nearly the extent they now have. But all the men enjoyed sporting the wide-brim Mountie-type hat. In this photo of a group of whites and Indians, the famous chief, Samson, is shown at lower right, while a Mountie is seated lower left. The picture was taken following a pow-wow held in Ponoka.

ection of Robert Dick and with the assistance of Ponoka businesses. The road required a great deal of corduroying before it was passable for teams.

The muskeg has a story all of its own—many are the tales that it probably could tell. Many head of livestock were lost and even some humans have had narrow escapes. There are incidents told of persons saving themselves by having their rifles to keep themselves from sinking out of sight. The old trail became the Bashaw highway and when the Provincial Government crews fixed it, they hauled a great deal of dirt from the farms of Floyd Stretch and Cecil Dick to fill the treacherous muskeg.

The community was not long without religious guidance, the first services being held in Henry Dick's house by a student minister named Boyd. In 1901, Rev. John Mair, a Presbyterian minister, conducted services in pioneer homes, alternating every Sunday with the Methodist minister, Rev. T. Perrey. Later, services were held in the school house.

In 1902, a school committee was formed, consisting of John Posey, chairman; Joe Eakin, secretary-treasurer; and Henry Dick. The school was built by C. H. Wyers and opened during the autumn, with the teacher being Miss M. E. Bray. She received \$540 per annum for the 1902-3 school years. Following her was Miss Mabel Capling, 1904-5; Miss M. M. Sproule, 1905; Miss Caroline Hartt, 1906; Miss A. P. Wanless, 1907; Miss M. McDougal, 1907-8; Miss Mary Harding, 1908-9; Miss M. E. Chambers, 1909-10; and H. H. Costain 1910-11.

A list of most of the first pupils at the school includes: Cora, Will and Fred Turner; Wallace, Clyde and Florence Dewhirst; Elida and Bessie Eakin; Beulah Goodman; Ed. Schierer; Laura and Leona Posey; Roy, Minard, DeForest and Debs Nelson; Max MacGillivray; Noble and Ernest Price; Myrtle Dickinson; Ella Dalton; Ada and Vernon Morris.

The school was used until September 1951, when the pupils began going to Ponoka by bus. The building then was purchased by the district and named the Eastside Community Centre.

The first picnic was held on July 4th, 1902, by the lake shore on Robert Dick's place. There was a good crowd but shortly after lunch a rain shower broke up the gathering.

The James brothers had a large steam engine which sounded its steam whistle every time it passed the school. Frank Scott had a stationary engine which he transported on a sleigh to cut wood. There also was a horse-powered outfit used for sawing wood in the district.

Settlers in the Eastside district by 1903 include: Sam Lucas, George Ferguson, Howard Lucas, Henry Dick, Robert Dick, Abe Vansyckle, John Posey, Joe Eakin, Jesse Branner, Sr., Mr. Dickson, Walter Dewhirst, Sr., Arthur Dewhirst, W. J. Bowes, Joe. Davis, Frank Scott, John Dalton, Mr. Price, Mr. Starky, W. J. Turner, Mr. Becker, Mr. Harrington, Will MacGillivray, Mr. Fleming and Mr. Morris.

Early settlers but not homesteaders include: Evan Davies, John and Jim Wilson, William Harper, Herb Stretch, Will Schierer, George Steele, Norman Whitten, Hans Larsen and Roy Whitten.

ELKHORN

This district partly consists of the Sharphead Indian Reserve, which was abandoned by the government in 1890 and thrown open for settlement in 1899. Before it was opened, only about four sections in the area were available for homesteading.

Among those early settlers were the Ogilvies, Wrights, Rowlands, Taylors, Clinks, Frys and Smiths. The first white baby was born to Mr. and Mrs. Bell Ogilvie in a log cabin on Wolf Creek in about 1895. This homestead later became the Brewer farm.

Chris Asmussen built on the land later taken by Andrew Rourke, and, in



Ponoka has always had good gun shots. In 1913 the Ponoka Gun Club were the champions of Alberta. L to R—Charles Segerstrom, Bert Pendleton Martin Bednar, Bill Kennedy, R. K. Allan and Fred Lee. The large cup on the trophy table was won by Mr. Bednar and denotes the championship.

those early days, Mrs. Rourke did considerable writing for eastern newspapers under the pen name of "Western Jenny."

The first school classes were held in a log house occupied by the Clink family. The present school was built in about 1902. The Free Methodist Church was built on the Perkins' farm in the early 1920's.

The turn of the century saw a large influx of immigrants from the United States. Among these were the families of Ephraim Palmer, James Brewer, J. L. Beach, Mr. Cunningham and D. J. Perkins.

The Elkhorn district also had a baseball team during the early days in a league with Bentley, Rimbey and Lacombe.

HAZEL HILL

In 1898, the Hazel Hill district was a wilderness of poplars, balsam of gilead and spruce groves, with much burned over land, blackened stumps and windfalls. There were no roads, not even trails, for the early settlers.

Lars Larsen was the first resident and still lives on his farm. It was here the first oil strike was made in the district.

After this pioneer came C. J. Felstrom, Fred Harris and Mr. Stephen—all living on section 24 with Lars Larsen. Then came E. C. Bennett, Emmitt Harris, Mrs. Palmer, Martin Wilcox and James Harris, the latter buying land near the lakes. Another pioneer was George Warren.

N. P. Nelson, an early settler, was the driving force behind the erection of Hazel Hill school in 1903. The name "Hazel Hill" was selected by Gerty Bennett. Construction work was done by John Rathburn, with Mr. Nelson acting as school trustee until he left the district in 1911. This pioneer also built the log house now owned by Emory Reid, on its original site.

A church was erected north of Hazel Hill in 1904.

Among the early pioneers were William Gee, who moved to the district in 1910, followed by Ivor Massing and C. P. Kay. Other oldtimers include: Charlie Taylor, Mat Matteson, Niels Matteson, Steele and Elmer Chichester,

Vern, Lorn and West Smith. Others who came later with their families were: Joe Reid, R. B. Holmes, H. H. Cox, John Gable and George Beal.

SCOTT

South and east of Ponoka are three beautiful little lakes known locally as Chain Lakes, although they are not recorded on maps by that name. The early settlers, finding them teeming with fish and the land abounding with game, decided to settle nearby. The land surrounding the first two lakes, but mostly to the west, was formed into the Scott School District.

The first settler was a man named Sausen, who homesteaded the district in 1898. Following him were such pioneers as the families of Truman, Huscroft, Jones, Algar, Stoutenburg, Bures, Donovan and Newton.

The school was built in 1902 and first classes were held in the following year, with Miss Olive Walker being the teacher. Three of the first pupils still living include Mrs. Truman (Naomi Huscroft), Harry Truman and Eddie Donovan. First school board was made up of Dick Pulver, J. Y. Scott and Charles Truman, with John Coleman as secretary.

The school is larger than most of the original schools about the country. The reason is that one of the directors wanted it large enough for funerals and public gatherings, there being no church in the district. Down through the years it has served as a community centre as well as a school. When classes were discontinued, the community purchased the building and named it the Chain Lakes Community Centre.

Dr. Drinnan, the first doctor in Ponoka, bought land in the Scott district in about 1900 and spent his retirement on this land overlooking Chain Lakes.

The lakes have continued to be a favorite picnic and fishing spot for people from the surrounding area. Almost everyone who grew up in the district and has left, makes it a point to visit the lakes whenever they return.

DAKOTA

In the fall of 1899 two families, the Wings and Olmsteads, arrived in the hamlet of Ponoka from South Dakota. They formed the nucleus of the Dakota settlement.

These two families built a small shack in town where they lived while building the houses and barns, mostly of log, on their homestead to which they moved during the winter.

In the spring of 1900 about half a dozen families arrived from the same neighborhood of South Dakota. These families were met by the pioneers and escorted up the north and east banks of the Battle River along an Indian trail until they came to what is known as Ferrybank. There a wonderful family by the name of Tyner lived. Here they had to cross the river to the south, and as the ice had gone out, a bridge had to be built.

This was done by felling two tall trees across and covering them with poles. During the summer a better one was built which went out the following spring. Next a bridge with stone piers was built which withstood the floods and storms until the government constructed the present steel bridge.

In the summer of 1901, a school district was formed by the late Messrs D. Wing and E. R. Olmstead, and as they expected some to die a cemetery was laid out right beside the school grounds on Olmstead's land. The school was built the following year by the late Hugh Miller, and is one of the few one-room schools still in use today.

The cemetery is well kept and a credit to the district and many of the pioneers are here laid to rest.

In the fall of 1901 the first threshing machine which came into the district was a very crude, hand-fed machine with no straw carrier or grain elevator, and powered by eight-horse power. This machine was owned and operated by

the late Fred Warren from north of Ponoka.

The following summer (1902) the late Geo. Winslow came into the district from South Dakota, bringing with him an up-to-date, fourteen horse-power machine with which he did the threshing for a number of years. In the fall of 1905 a horse-power machine trailed up the west side of the Battle River to Pigeon Creek, crossed over to the east and came south to Lloyd's. It did all the threshing on both sides of the river and took a total of seventy-three days.

The same route was taken the next year with a Case steamer operated by the Hoar brothers. It was not long before steam whistles were heard in all directions. Operators used to vie with one another to see who would be first to waken the neighborhood.

The trend then turned from steamers to gas tractors followed by their four and six bundle racks instead of the usual ten to twelve racks following steamers.

Today, forced by the shortage of labour, we have turned from the old methods of threshing to combines and there is now a combine on nearly every farm.

A year or so before the settlement of Dakota there was a colony of Nova Scotians who came by way of Lacombe. They were wonderful axe-men, consequently their log buildings were very neat structures.

During the years 1902-3 many pioneers were trekking through west and north to other districts—Chesterwold, Lundgren, Bismark and Buckhorn with its Ox King Dad Davidson, whose homestead was known as Crystal Springs.

One of the high-lights of the day was to see Dad going through with his four to eight yoke of oxen, side-riding on the line. His booming Gee and Haw



Early one Sunday morning in March of 1905, the school bell rang the alarm for the most destructive fire in Ponoka's history. It was discovered in Fairley's store. Fire equipment of those days was inadequate to cope with the blaze, and it spread to Spackman's Hardware, The Trimble and Fairfield livery stable, the bowling alley and restaurant run by Mr Threlkeld, the office of lawyer J. Jackson and the office of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Everything in the block was burned, except the Royal Hotel, which was saved by a bucket brigade. The picture shows the block after the blaze, with the Royal standing alone and citizens probing the ruins.

and the pistol-like crack of his ox whip could be heard for miles on the still, twilight air.

In the early days transportation either by horse-back or wagon was the usual thing. It was quite a common thing to see a young man riding one horse and leading another going to pick up his girl friend and then go on for another eight or ten miles to a dance in some school or homesteader's log house. We also had our own musicians in the persons of Messrs Anderson and Wald.

Another hardship and discouragement of the early settlers should be mentioned here. Many lost nearly all their horses with swamp fever. It was not uncommon to see a man breaking with part horses and part oxen, or even a cow hitched in.

Church and funeral services were always held in the school house until the present church was built across the road from the school under the chairmanship of the late E. F. Bresee. They have always had a student preacher for the summer months and an occasional minister from Ponoka at other times. They have a very active Ladies' Aid to help out with financial difficulties.

Dakota also had its early ball team captained by Jack Lee. Jack always said he would have nine of his own some day. Don't know if he quite made the full team but they were all ardent ball players. Those first ball players included Jack Lee, C. S. Wing, F. Cissell, Ed. Chapell, Clint Bailey, Elmer Skinner, Waldo Herrick, Ned Clough and Geo. Winslow, Jr.

They also had a two-team club with Dakota and a team down Lacombe way called Bull Town.

One league game played on the 1st of July many years ago on the farm of Joseph Stewart, will be long remembered. Mr. Stewart had a big log barn with a large hay loft he had made into a dance hall. After a full line of sports was run off the day was rounded out with a grand barn dance. We also had our industrial ambitions. In the fall of 1905 in co-operation with surrounding districts a Government creamery was established under the leadership of C. P. Marker who was then Dairy Commissioner for the province. Sylvester Archibald was the first operator appointed and the board elected by the patrons consisted of E. R. Olmstead, Geo. Herrick, C. Hemeyer, John Hoar, Geo. Winslow, Sr., Sam Clark and Joseph Stewart with Proctor Burwash as secretary-treasurer.

This enterprise ran for a number of years under government control. It was not too satisfactory perhaps because of the price which was 10 to 15 cents per pound of butterfat.

After a few years the local board paid up some \$1300 still owing the Government and undertook to operate it themselves. Eventually they got discouraged and turned it over to the community for a public hall which is still in use.

A word should be said for the early mail carriers. The first few years mail was received at Ferrybank, but in 1907 or 1908 a route was established from Ponoka to Bismark, Crystal Springs, Home Glen, Bluffton, then known as Nugent, Springdale and Lavesta, with Mr. B. F. Craig as mail carrier. As the route passed through the Dakota Settlement many had Mr. Craig deliver their mail at their gate.

Mr. Craig was a very conscientious man, and rain or shine, high water or low, he saw that the mail got through. One summer he drowned two teams crossing swollen streams, and as he was a very large man it was miraculous that he could scramble to safety.

After Mr. Craig came Mr. Joe. McCullough who carried the mail until the route was established.

This last summer a modern two-sheet curling rink with a regulation size skating rink on the side was constructed in which both young and old have many good times. You might ask: "How could all this be done?" Very simple. "Just community spirit—each for all and all for each."

I think this would be a little remiss if no mention was made of one of the

early families who came with the spring immigration of 1900. I refer to the late Mr. and Mrs. Frank Cissell. I doubt very much if there is a home in the district in which Frank and Cora, as they were familiarly known, have not had some hand in the making. Many thanks for the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Cissell.

I have tried to reminisce on what has taken place in the past fifty or so years in the Dakota Settlement. Who can predict what will happen fifty years hence?

HISTORY OF THE WEST PONOKA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Some of the first settlers to this district were the Andrew Peterson family who homesteaded down by the Battle River. The J. S. Shay family also settled near Fort Ostell about this time. Then came P. C. Iversen and the Hans Larsen family who lived south of the river. Farther to the north settled Henry Myer, Andy Reid and Alexander Canada. A. Reid homesteaded the quarter of land that the cemetery is now on. Mr. Canada's homestead is now known as the Fritz Bachor place. Joseph Reid homesteaded a few miles to the northwest of this. About 1900 came a Russell known as "Uncle Tom," and his two nephews George and W. T. Russell. A Polander by the name of John Poleskie settled the south-west of section 16. Also one of the early settlers was William Reid and Mr. Martin Wright and family. Farther east were families of Robinsons, Samuel Sr., and Samuel, Jr. Thomas Kennedy was one of the early section foremen who settled north of town.

PLEASANT HILL

Since the old Calgary-Edmonton trail angled across this district, it was probably one of the first districts around Ponoka to be settled. The first post-office and Hudson Bay post was on the farm now owned by the Poffenroth sisters. The building was used for many years as a granary. When it was torn down last winter the upper logs were still well preserved.

The Poffenroth sisters' home was used as a hotel and stopping place. Ammunition for fighting the Indians was stored in the cellar of the house. The house was built before 1883 and the trading post a few years earlier. The McHugh (possibly McEwen) Bros. and Wm. Willet were connected in the very early days with this farm.

Another stopping place was on the farm of G. L. Landmark. This was operated by a halfbreed. Later the farm was deserted for many years until bought by Mr. Harry Stelfox.

Part of this district lies in the old Stoney Indian Reserve. Most of the Indians died of small-pox and the rest were transferred to another reserve. The old Methodist Mission House was just north of this district. By the types of arrowheads found on the farmland, many Indian battles must have been fought here.

Another post office was operated by John Blackstock from his homestead on the Chesney farm a mile west of Morningside. He carried the mail on foot to the train in Morningside. If he missed the train he had to walk and carry it on to Lacombe. His wife was a member of the missionary family of Rev. John McDougall.

Why did people homestead where they did? Well, according to Roy Flegal, who arrived here in 1893, he left Lacombe on horseback headed for the north country. There were so many sloughs and rough country that his horse dropped dead a mile southwest of Morningside. Mr. Flegal built his house and homesteaded right there. Now he lives in a modern house near the same spot.

The Pleasant Hill School Division No. 607 was organized in 1901. John Bell, a homesteader in the district, built the school house which was finished in 1902. During the first years pupils attended from as far away as Morning

side. The school received its name from the hill to the west of the grounds.

The following names appear on the minutes of the first meetings: Messrs. James Riddock, Fred Bach, Wm. Witt, Chris Schade, Peter Goettsch and Roy Flegal.

Other families in the district in the late 1890's and early 1900's were those of John Avery, J. Seifert, Emory Clemens, Robert Detlaff, W. James, John Wright, George Wright, Tom Williams, James McGarvey, Roy Sweet, Christie Bros., Ephraim Mathias, Henry Webster, Sherman Dye, Charles Winslow and George Haney.

Roy Flegal is the only pioneer still living on his homestead. Children of the early pioneers living on the original family home site are Leland McGarvey, Lee Sweet and Oliver Winslow.

DENNIS

First family in the district was that of J. A. Dick, who arrived on November 4, 1899. Having weathered that winter they homesteaded in the district, which was named Brooks that year. During 1900 and 1901 the families of Frank Fish, R. Deyo, W. H. Mullins, W. Muir, G. Limbert, R. Mattern, J. Coulson, G. Clark, H. Lincoln, John Mattern, A. Lincoln, J. Stretch, A. Stretch, Tom and Cliff Stretch all moved in. Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Brown and Mr. and Mrs. T. C. Stretch were newlyweds who arrived the same year. All these people came from various points in the U.S. and all took homesteads.

The men got busy in the early winter under the leadership of Mr. Fish, and built the school, which was located on the southeast corner of Mr. Dick's quarter, where the Dennis church is today. It was opened in March, 1901, with Mr. Harold Gibson the first teacher. Mr. Fish, Mr. Deyo and Mr. Dick were the first trustees. There were about 26 pupils to start with.

Church services were held by the Presbyterian students, and Mr. J. Mair was the first ordained minister to take charge.

Alice Dick (Mrs. Ralph Stevenson, of Edmonton) was the first child born there.

Of the old timers, Mrs. J. A. Dick, Ponoka and Mrs. G. Clark, also of Ponoka, are the only ones left. There are several children of these pioneers still living in the community. J. C. Dick, Mrs. Roy Donaghy, Mrs. E. J. Lloyd, Alf Mattern, A. W. Mattern, Mrs. Irl Harris and O. C. Cunningham came with their parents. Roger Stretch, Gordon Stretch, Mrs. Dave Grant, Mrs. Glen Johnson, Mrs. Paul Sorenson, Albert Mattern, were all born here. Others who came to the district before 1904 were C. O. Cunningham and family, Mr. Moody and family, Mr. McBride and family, Mr. Shreve and family, Mrs. Windsor and family and G. Canfield and family. Mrs. C. O. Cunningham always believed there was oil in this part of the country but didn't live to see the realization of it.

HOME GLEN

The earliest settler in the Home Glen district was a character called "Old man Jackson." He homesteaded the Stewart Ranch in 1904.

The Jim Burns family came to the Glen in 1906 from Nova Scotia. There were three sons, Bob, Ray and Tom. Both Bob and Ray married local girls, both have lived here all their lives and both have raised families.

The Bill Bates family also came in 1906. Earl, Charlie, Mabel and Edith were the children. Both boys married and live in the Glen; Mabel is now Mrs. Sam Doran of Chesterwold.

The school was built in 1908, and was named after a place in Scotland. It is one of the very few "little red schoolhouses" still in operation. The

post-office has been moved many times, but it is no more. Mail is now delivered twice a week from Bluffton.

The Whyette family lived near the end of Lost Lake, where they settled about 1909. Godfrey and Clem Pike homesteaded in 1908 on the site of the Home Glen school. Harry and Jack Stelfox, with their sister (the present Mrs. Bob Burns) homesteaded west of the Glen. They were great hunters and kept greyhounds and bloodhounds for that purpose.

Other early settlers were the McCaulas, the Dyes, the Crosses, Creightons, Stewarts and the Jensens.

Rodney Jensen now runs the Home Glen store and cream route. The hall was not built until a few years ago, and it serves a real need in this community 28 miles northwest of Ponoka.

CLIMAX

In 1901 a meeting was held at the W. A. Martin home to discuss and organize a school district. Among those attending from the south were L. J. Nelson, Ed. Peterson. Later Magic and Climax schools came into being. The first three teachers were Miss Mae Farlin, Miss Shafer and Miss Parlee.

Some of the first settlers were Mr. and Mrs. James Milburn, who drove a covered wagon from Nebraska, and led their cows behind; Hugh Jones and wife, the Taylor family, Mr. and Mrs. Tate, Mr. Stanley and son, Lionel; W. N. Story, Owen Williams, the Headleys; Mr. and Mrs. Walter, Mr. and Mrs. L., Mr. and Mrs. Bird; Mr. and Mrs. Carl Morris; the Tom Owens family; Mr. and Mrs. Griffith, selling their home to Mr. and Mrs. Reese Jones and family; Mr. and Mrs. Levi Davies, Mr. and Mrs. Evan Davies; Mr. and Mrs. Will T. Jones, and Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Magedans.

Other early settlers in the district included Mr. and Mrs. Ekeli and family; Mr. and Mrs. Fjeldheim, Mr. and Mrs. Frank James and family, Mr. and



One of the first frame houses built in the farming community surrounding Ponoka is the Wm. A. Martin home, pictured here. It was built in 1901 in the Climax district, about 10 miles east of town. The lumber was brought from South Dakota, unloaded and floated down the Battle River to near the site where the house was erected.

Mrs. Steele and family, Mr. and Mrs. Vold and family. The second and even the third generations of these families still make the Climax district their home.

The countryside in those early days was liberally laced with swamps and sloughs, and the trails wound in and out among them, seldom going in a straight line. Water was everywhere. On any trip of that period it was unusual if the horses did not sink in the mud. The usual procedure then was to unhitch the team, attach a chain to the wagon and attempt to pull the load out of the mud. Often help was needed and it required four or more horses before the wagons came free. Bridges were made of poles across the streams. It was often unnerving (particularly for youngsters) when the horses missed their footing and slipped down between the poles.

The first picnic in the district was held on Frank Tate's farm. Here a floor was laid for dancing, a frame of poles erected and covered with green boughs. Music was supplied by three violins in the hands of George Ferguson, Will Ferguson and Mr. Triverens.

A popular winter sport was rabbit hunting. The country was literally overrun by rabbits. The men formed into teams, captains were appointed, and the side bringing home the fewest rabbits had to pay for the usual oyster supper.

What a sight! Piles of rabbits on the school grounds—and quite a task just to count them. They were not wasted, however. Many people ate rabbit meat throughout the winter and salted them for summer use. Beef and pork was also salted down in barrels, steak dried for 'dried beef' and pork 'sugarcured.'

Before cream separators came on the scene, milk was put in huge upright tanks and cold water added to bring the cream to the top. Butter was made in 25 or 50 pound wooden tubs for market.

CHESTERWOLD AND FERRYBANK

Mrs. Tyner, a widow with two sons, was the first settler in what is now the Ferrybank and Chesterwold districts. In 1897 this family built a log house near Pigeon Creek. During the winter two young brothers—Joe and Andy Reid—tended these cattle. They did not see another white man all winter.

In 1898 Tyners moved to Ferrybank and built a store and a ferry across the Battle River. Thus came the name Ferrybank. The groceries at that time were hauled by two-wheeled cart (there is one in the picture of the old saw-mill) and the post office was opened in 1901.

The following year the school was built. The first members were Bob Tyner O. L. Webster (one of Ponoka's first auctioneers) and O. M. Adams, who homesteaded the Marcus Crandall farm.

About 1906, the Tyners sold their store, and the post office was moved a mile east, where it remained until establishment of R.R. 4 from Ponoka. Girls were scarce in those days, and Jim Earl wrote back east in answer to a newspaper advertisement and married a fine wife.

In 1904 Mrs. Lawrence Doran entertained 13 bachelors for Christmas dinner. Each received a pot holder and a bag of cookies from the Christmas tree and all enjoyed a "woman-cooked meal just like back home."

With more cattle arriving in the country all the time, citizens felt it was about time to do something about all the milk and cream, and so in 1905 they built the Ferrybank creamery. Backers included such men as John Hoar, Geo. Herrick, Lawrence Doran, Wallace Archibald and W. Hemeyer. S. C. Archibald was the first buttermaker.

Jack Rattery, who lived five miles to the north, hauled cream twice a week, making a 40-mile trip each time. The creamery operated until 1917, and was forced to close by the advent of trucks and bonuses for sweet cream.

Residents of the district dug down in their pockets again: the original



Chesterwold was famous for its ball teams many years ago. This picture, taken in 1915, shows one of the winning teams. Standing, L to R: Walter Larsen, J. C. Lee, Will Hall, Marcus Crandall, Earl Clark. Seated, L to R: Scott Courser, George Larsen, Ray Rochon, John Leidenius.

bondholders pledged \$100 each and more shares were sold at \$10.00 each in order to convert the creamery to a hall. It's known as Ferrybank Hall, and has been a place of activity all through the years.

In 1899, Clarence Tompkins homesteaded at Chesterwold. He was one of the early men who worked on the river drive, bringing logs down the Battle River to the mills at Ponoka. Myron Kimmerly and family, Frank Allen, the S. Lannings and the Raradins also came that year. In 1902 the Unlands, Converses, Woods, Lawrence Doran, Sam Clark, the Rochon family and the Hainers all arrived and began building homes.

There are many more: Bill and Al Johnston, the former being the father of Glen Johnston, our present M.L.A.; Geo. Cluff, George Herrick, Bill and Jim King, the Carrigan brothers, Albert Peterson, Pat Lynch, Nade and Fred MacEwen.

In 1902, Pete Cooper from Chesterwold, Nebraska, started a store and soon opened a post office named after his home town. A few years later he built a huge dance hall and a barn to hold the teams.

The Unland family arrived that year, too. At one time they owned six or seven sections of land, but most has now been sold and only the Hugo and Alf Unland families remain. The Converse family were prominent in the logging business. Mr. Converse ran a mill at both Pigeon and Battle Lakes, and in Ponoka.

Lawrence Doran built his first house in 1902, although he had arrived in the district the previous year. Both Mr. Doran and his wife were active in all community work—clubs, schools, health and even politics. Their hospitality was known from Pigeon Lake to Ponoka, and never a man, red or white, ever left the Doran farm hungry.

Space does not permit telling of all the pioneers who came to this wonderful land in later years, but one man in the Ferrybank district deserves special mention. That man is Marcus Crandall, our reeve and councillor for so many years.

Mr. Crandall came to Ferrybank in 1901, with his father and mother and four brothers and four sisters. Charlie, Marcus and Harry married the three

daughters of Mrs. Franklin, a widow who homesteaded the farm now owned by Oron Santee. Mrs. Crandall passed away in 1912, and Marcus married Miss Ida Reynolds in 1918. Seven children of this marriage all live in Ponoka county.

Marcus bought a steam threshing rig in 1916, and threshed from north of Chesterwold to south of Lochinvar. As he advanced financially he also advanced in the esteem and respect of his neighbors, as witness his long term in public office. He has helped many a young man to a start in farming in this district.

Bridges were almost as necessary as houses in this country. Many settlers built their own. The first government built bridge across the Battle River was erected in 1905 at Chesterwold; while the Ferrybank bridge was built by donated work in 1903.

Health for man and beast was a real problem. Doctors had to come from Wetaskiwin or Lacombe by team, and there was no hospital in either place. Many died for want of proper medical attention. Childbirth was a hazard for both mother and child, in spite of the excellent work of such good general nurses as Mrs. Jack Rattery, Mrs. Franklin and Mrs. Frank Cissell, who acted as midwives for many babies throughout the northwest and surely deserve a mention in any book of memory.

The first Chesterwold picnic was held in 1909, complete with horse races and games of all kinds. Each year saw more races, a better track, more and better ball teams being added by the sports-minded committee.

By 1915 the Chesterwold Stampede, complete with bucking corral and grandstand, was a 'must'—whether one came by buggy, lumber wagon or Model T. One man even arrived riding an ox with the other ox hitched single to a buggy overflowing with children.

In 1920, the stampede moved to Ferrybank because the picnic grounds had been sold. The last stampede was held at Ferrybank in 1937, when Ponoka began negotiations to take over the first of July date and start its big two-day show. Our community picnic had grown too big for its britches!

Halfway Grove school was built in 1918, and named by Mrs. Lawrence Doran after the grove, halfway between Ponoka and Pigeon Lake, where both Indians and whites used to camp. There was water, wood and shelter here, and it was just about as far from town as a team could travel with a load in a day.

Don't ever think the ladies of our district didn't take an active part in affairs. In 1913 they organized the Chesterwold Women's Institute. It was a new organization in those days, but it was enthusiastically supported by a membership of 32. Mrs. Lawrence Doran was secretary-treasurer for thirteen years.

As early as 1918 the ladies had a nurse out to speak on public health. They had doctors down from Edmonton for a clinic at Chesterwold hall in 1924. Inoculations, vaccinations, teeth and eye treatments were the order of the day—and even a few tonsils were removed.

BOBTAIL

The Bobtail district is the newest of the districts surrounding Ponoka, having been formed since the first World War. Originally it was Indian Reserve land, and the only settlers before 1918 were Geo. P. Ferguson and Jake Beck.

Following the war's end the district was opened to settlers, with Mrs. Kelly being the first in the area. Mr. Jake Beck also bought land here, married Mrs. Kelly and farmed for some years.

In 1917 Geo. Ferguson bought a quarter in the district, which today is being farmed by his sons, Robert and Frank.

Following the first war, the land was opened up for soldier settlement.

Among the original settlers were: W. R. Eastwood, George Aylwin, Dan Beaton, Harry Bailey, Bill Kerr, E. Stoutenberg, Tom Aylwin, C. Hemeyer, J. Hodson, John Barclay, Peter MacDonald, A. Nicholas, Stuart McPherson, R. Lewis, T. Nixon, A. Liddle, J. R. Jones, R. Amos, Wm. Rowden, G. Anderson, W. Harper, Jack Lewis, Louis Reeve and Charles Renton.

The Bobtail school district was formed in 1922, and a small school erected; with the present one being built in 1930. When the first school was in use, Rev. J. J. James conducted services there every second Sunday. Music was supplied by Mrs. James with her accordion, and there were times in the winter when she could hardly play for the cold.

Since the days of original settlers, 15 have moved off the farm, four have died and four places were taken over by the Soldier Settlement Board and resold.

Six of the original settlers still live on their farms. They are: W. R. Eastwood, L. Larsen, B. Harper, J. Lewis, L. Reeve and C. Renton.

PONOKA EAST

There is a strip of land two miles wide lying just east of Ponoka, which is not included in any of the named districts. This area is commonly known as Ponoka East. The area was one of the earliest to be settled. W. H. Stretch farmed his homestead until his retirement in 1944; Ed. Martin farmed a homestead which he filed in 1899. The farm now owned by Luther Larsen was homesteaded by Mr. Bush, who was the first man in the district to attempt growing tomatoes, pumpkins and other vegetables. Up till that time the climate was considered too cold for such growth.

On Mr. Bush's quarter there was a nice lake which has been dry now for a number of years. In the early days, though, it made a wonderful spot for picnics and swimming and skating. Among the pioneers was W. Lucas, who sold his farm to Ed. Hinkley in the early 1900's; J. D. Vincent, J. D. Barnes.

Mr. Barnes came to Ponoka in 1903 and lived here for a short time before taking a homestead on the Blindman River. Because there were no schools here he returned to Ponoka district and settled in Ponoka East. The family lived here for 43 years, when Mr. Barnes moved into Ponoka two years ago. Last December, he celebrated his 89th birthday.


Others included S. Tugman, L. Davies, Mr. Legg, Mr. Quackenbush, Mr. Sharpe, R. Strause and F. Crawford, L. B. Ferguson, P. Iversen, J. D. McGilivray.

In the southern portion were W. L. Steele, H. Zimmerman, F. C. Case, A. Weis, A. H. Peterson, J. N. Shaft. Moving northward such names as Bruce Patterson, R. McLaren, Sr., F. Robertson, Ray Carter. Some land in this area, now owned by the provincial government, is reminiscent of such names as Mitchell and Haley.

Originally, of course, the town was almost completely on the west side of the river, with farmsteads reaching to the river's edge. There is a growing portion of the town itself on the east side now, and a number of oldtimers are living in the district, known as Riverside. They include Dr. W. Pullyblank, Lyle Dick, Howard Lucas, Frank Newton, S. Fuller, Ed. Dittberner, James Cadek, Mrs. F. S. James, B. Huddleston, John Hinkley, E. Griffiths, B. Kyler, V. Wills, Mrs. E. Albers, E. Pendleton. The first store on the east side was built in 1946 by Geo. Hinkley, grandson of pioneer E. Hinkley.

Pioneers

(Editor's note: In compiling the History of Ponoka, many short biographies have been submitted from interested persons in the district. We include here a brief reference to some of these pioneers from the information provided. This can in no way be considered a complete list of the many important families which settled in the town and district after 1900.)



MR. AND MRS. FRITZ BACHOR

Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Bachor came to Ponoka from the Usona district in 1909 and bought the Pioneer Meat Market. Mr. Bachor sold his last meat business in 1940. Mrs. Bachor still resides in Ponoka.

MR. AND MRS. JAMES D. BARNES

Mr. and Mrs. James D. Barnes and family of six came to Ponoka from Surprise, Nebraska, on March 21, 1903. They lived for a time across from the north bridge, moving from there to a farm a mile north of town, and later to other parts of the district. Mr. Barnes and five children still reside in the area.

EDWARD E. BASCOM

Edward E. Bascom came to the Ponoka district from Oklahoma in 1906, settling on a farm about three miles north of town in 1911. He was one of the first rural free delivery mailmen in Alberta, handling an area 50 miles long three times a week. He retired in 1929.

SIDNEY BIRD

Sidney Bird, a Ponoka businessman for many years, bought the Campbell Drug Store in about 1915, and later built the Bird Drug store. Mr. and Mrs. Bird now reside in Edmonton.

GEORGE BOWKER

George Bowker came to Ponoka from Eastern Canada in 1905, building the Bowker Funeral Home and the Bowker Lumber Yard. He conducted the United Church choir for 30 years and was devoted to the work of the Shrine and Masonic Lodges. Mr. Bowker passed away May 24, 1947.

MRS. PETER BRADY

Mrs. Peter Brady came to Ponoka in 1903 to farm north of E. Larsen's place. Her son, Mike, lived in town from about 1905 until his death in 1952. His wife and son, Gerald, still live in Ponoka.

MILTON KYLER

Milton Kyler came to Ponoka in 1902, filing on a homestead in the Springdale District. In the following year his two oldest sons built a log house for the family, which arrived in January 29th, 1904. After seven years, the family moved to Ponoka where a son and two daughters still reside.

WALTER F. LARSEN

Walter F. Larsen came to Ponoka in 1906 with his cousin, Marinus Jensen. Two years later he went into the livery barn business in town where the Robinson store is now located. He married Miss Sara Peterson of the Climax district in 1910 and purchased the George Beal farm a mile north of town. Mr.

Larsen passed away in December, 1943, and his wife in October, 1952. A son, Edward, still lives at the farm.

THOMAS McKELVEY

Thomas McKelvey arrived in Ponoka in April, 1902, operating a sawmill and lumber yard until 1910. During this time, he also built and operated Ponoka's first grain elevator in 1909. Two members of the family, P. A. and Gordon McKelvey, still reside in town.

FRANK O. NEWTON

Frank O. Newton came to Ponoka from Crete, Nebraska, on September 6th, 1901. He filed on a homestead 14 miles southeast of town and bought a C.P.R. quarter eight miles southeast of Ponoka. After proving up the land he moved to town, operating one of the first draying outfits. In 1910, Mr. Newton married Miss Mabel V. Barnes and settled on a farm two years later. After 33 years, they moved back to Ponoka. Children in the district include Guy, Glenn, Gordon, Mrs. Esther Lucas, Mrs. Evelyn Pendleton and Mrs. Elthia Oness.

CHRIS. SCHMIDT

Chris. Schmidt came to Ponoka with his parents and family in 1905 where he lived north of Lucas Heights. Mr. Schmidt was manager of an elevator for several years.

MR. AND MRS. SLATER

Mr. and Mrs. Slater came to Ponoka from the Seafield district in 1904, Mr Slater entering the real estate business for a few years. His son R. H. Slater, has been drayman in Ponoka for many years.

MR. AND MRS. W. H. SMITH

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Smith, with their son Harry, came to Ponoka in 1910. Their son has been in business in the Smith Block for much of that time.

MR. AND MRS. HENRY STRAUSE

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Strause came to Ponoka in 1908, where Mr. Strause worked at the Provincial Mental Hospital and later at Fort Saskatchewan for a total of 25 years. Mrs. Strause still resides in the home occupied by the family for more than 40 years. Two children, Ray and Fred, live in Ponoka.

J. A. FARRELL

J. A. Farrell came to Ponoka in 1910 as a hardware clerk for R. K. Allan. He later was in partnership with Mr. Kleekner in the Royal Hotel, later moving to the Leland Hotel with R. Stewart. Mr. Farrell is now in the real estate business.

MR. AND MRS. JAMES STOUTENBURG

Mr. and Mrs. James Stoutenburg and family came to Ponoka in 1904 from the Eastside district to start a dray business in town.

GEORGE GORDON

George Gordon became proprietor of the Ponoka Herald shortly after his arrival in Ponoka in 1904. He became postmaster in 1914, and was for many years associated with the development of the town.

FRANK S. JAMES

In 1900, Frank S. James homesteaded and bought railroad land east of Ponoka. Four years later, he and his brothers Ed. and Griff purchased one of the first steam threshers in the district—a Port Huron. In 1921, his hard rubber tired truck was a novelty, hauling 60 bushels of wheat 11 miles to Ponoka, making two trips daily.

WILLIAM A. MARTIN

William A. Martin homesteaded and purchased a section of railroad land for \$3 an acre, 10 miles east of Ponoka, in 1900. In the following year he brought his wife and family from White, North Dakota.

With them on the emigrant train were their household effects, barrels of flour, salt, sugar, supplies, machinery, horses and cattle. There were also doors, windows, finishing lumber, barrels of lime and hard finish for plaster, to go into the building of a large home.

In the coach on the train were big cook stoves where meals were cooked. When the train stopped to water the stock, the Martin's two cows were milked and eggs were gathered from the hens for the neighbors in the coach.

Upon arriving in Ponoka, the roads or trails were very bad for moving to the homestead, so a raft was built and lumber floated down the Battle River east for 10 miles, unloading two miles north of the farm.

A "barn raising" was organized after the house took shape and neighbors from all around came to raise the timbers. W. N. Story was up on top pinning them together.

With a horse-powered grinder, Mr. Martin made porridge meal and flour from his wheat. He also hauled wheat to the mill in Wetaskiwin where as much as 1,000 lbs. of white flour and cream of wheat were brought home in a single trip. Soap was made from lard, using home-made lye from wood ashes; starch was made from potatoes; butter color from carrots; while herbs were gathered for medicine.

MR. AND MRS. W. R. COURTRIGHT

W. R. Courtright came to Ponoka in 1899, with his wife and son, Len, and built the first frame house—a small building of four rooms, and unfinished the first winter. Within two years he added two rooms on the west.

After the municipality bought it about 1941, it was given a coat of stucco and is now occupied by the W. C. McIntosh Agencies and the Ponoka Shoe Clinic.

Mr. Courtright had the first lumber yard, with farm implements later. His office occupied the site of the Club Cafe. In 1909 the business was taken over by his son-in-law, W. L. Steele, who homesteaded the George Rees place in 1900. Mrs. Steele still resides in the home on 51st Avenue, bought from R. W. McKinnell in 1910.

EDWARD HINKLEY

Edward Hinkley came to Ponoka in 1898, to look over land, and two years later returned to settle on a homestead.

At that time there was no filing place in Ponoka, so Mr. Hinkley walked to Lacombe to file on land one mile north-east of town. He took the next train to his home in Nebraska, and made several trips before bringing his family and a carload of horses, machinery and household effects in 1904.

MRS. W. S. GREY

Mrs. W. S. Grey came to Ponoka with her small family from Virden, Manitoba, in the spring of 1896.

She stayed with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jas. Ledgerwood until early summer when Mr. Grey arrived. They farmed near Lacombe until 1898, Mr. Grey owning the first threshing outfit (horsepower) in that part of the country. He was killed while on his way to thresh in the Ponoka district, when the machine slipped on the icy road and fell on him.

Mrs. Grey returned to Ponoka, farming three and a half miles south east of town (Mental Hospital property). She later moved to town, remaining until she went to Edmonton in 1918.

MR. AND MRS. ARTHUR DEWHIRST

Mr. and Mrs. Dewhirst arrived in Ponoka in the summer of 1898, living just north of town for a short time. Mr. Dewhirst spent the winter at Innisfail, returning to Ponoka in the summer of 1899, taking a homestead in the Eastside district.

The couple continued to live on the place north of town while the new home was being built on the homestead. They were joined by a son Walter and family in 1900. Walter Dewhirst homesteaded the adjoining quarter, which at the present time is farmed by his son Wallace.

SAMUEL BRIGHAM LUCAS

Samuel Brigham Lucas was born July 15, 1844, in Aylmer, Quebec. On May 4, 1871, he married Amelia Frances Aylwin, and came west in 1879 as a government surveyor.

In 1881 Mr. Lucas returned to Ottawa for his wife and three children—Emma (who later married Herbert Lott), Thomas William, and Howard. They were accompanied by Mr. Lucas's brother, Frank Arnold and bride Margaret, also brother-in-law James Aylwin, whose fiancée Elizabeth Holbrooke followed in 1885.

The Lucas's and Mr. Aylwin travelled by train to Winnipeg and from there by Red River Cart to Edmonton and then back to Peace Hills, which is near Wetaskiwin. This trip took three months.

Edmonton was the nearest trading post, so a good supply of food was always kept on hand. In the winter dog teams were used to travel to Edmonton, while in the summer wagons drawn by horses or oxen were used.

During the Red River Rebellion of 1885 all the women and children were ordered to move from Peace Hills to Fort Edmonton in case of attack by Indians. However no fighting took place. At this time Mr. Lucas was Sub Agent of all the reserves from Peace Hills in the Wetaskiwin area, south to the Stony Reserve, which extended south and west of Ponoka.

In 1891 Mr. Lucas was transferred to the Sarcee Reserve at Calgary



50th Avenue, many years ago. An Indian pow-wow is going on in the vacant space—where Thirsk's 5c to \$1.00 Store now stands. The building on the left housing the Kennedy and Russell store, today houses Snappy Cleaners and Henry's Shoe Store. Note the wooden sidewalks and the plank crosswalks, the grass growing along the sides.

where he worked until 1897, at which time he left the employment of the government and moved to his homestead four miles east of Ponoka, on which he had filed in 1893. This farm had three small but deep lakes, two of these being joined by a narrow neck so the farm became known as Twin Lakes. It was homesteaded by Willie Lucas for his father from 1893 to 1897.

By 1897 Mr. and Mrs. Lucas' family had increased by one boy, Harry (who died on the Sarcee and was brought to the homestead for burial), and three daughters, Mary (later marrying George P. Ferguson), Clare (who married John Caldwell) and Judy (who married Donald Malin).

Mr. Lucas remained on the farm and still did the odd job of surveying for new settlers until his sudden death February 13, 1907. Mrs. Lucas remained on the farm until December 20, 1907, when she and Judy left for Victoria where they stayed with Emma and Herbert until May, 1908. On their return to Ponoka in 1908, Mrs. Lucas and Judy lived in town for some time, Judy working in the post office. After Judy's marriage, Mrs. Lucas resided with Willie and daughters Emma, Mary, Caley and Judy until her death in August 1918.

JAMES EDWARD AYLWIN

James Edward Aylwin was born in Aylmer, Quebec, on August 6, 1845 and came west in 1881 with his sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Lucas. This journey was made by rail as far as Winnipeg and then the long three month trek across the prairie to Edmonton and then to Peace Hills, where Wetaskiwin now stands.

Mr. Aylwin joined the staff of the Department of Indian Affairs under the direction of S. B. Lucas, who was Sub Agent at the Peace Hills Reserve. Mr. Aylwin worked until after the Rebellion in 1885, when he left the Department and took a homestead just south and west of the store at Menaik, now Les Bartley's.

Before coming west Elizabeth Holbrooke taught school at Kirks Ferry, Quebec. She journeyed west to Calgary by train and then by democrat to Peace Hills in early February, 1885. The winter being very mild with little snow the trip was made possible by wheel. On her arrival at Peace Hills she married J. E. Aylwin. The Rev. E. B. Glass, then Indian missionary at that time officiated at their wedding February 17, 1885. Shortly after the wedding Mrs. Aylwin with other relatives and friends was forced to take refuge in Fort Edmonton in case of attack from hostile Indians.

When the rebellion was over and the Indians had settled down Mr. and Mrs. Aylwin took up their abode on the homestead. Mr. Aylwin built a comfortable house, store and post office combined. The walls were of neatly hewn logs and the shingles of native lumber, hand made. The fur trade with the Indians was a source of revenue and as they were situated on the direct route of the freighters between Calgary and Edmonton their supplies were brought right to their door.

The later years on the old home place were spent farming. Mr. Aylwin continued to operate the farm until death took him by accident with his horses and binder in August 1915. Mrs. Aylwin passed away in Vancouver.

There were nine children: Thomas of Ottawa and Gertrude (Mrs. C. E. Chapman) of Coalspur, Alberta, the only surviving members; William, Abigail (Mrs. Godfrey Pike) Nellie, Mary, Charles, Percy and Mary Elizabeth all deceased.

EPHRAIM CHAMBERLAIN AYLWIN

Ephraim Aylwin was born in Aylmer, Quebec in 1834 and came west with his brother-in-law, S. B. Lucas, in 1879. They spent the winter at Pigeon Lake, and later Mr. Aylwin left for Montana where he lived for ten years.

On his return to Alberta he married Elaine Willet. They lived on a farm about two miles north of Ponoka. The house stood just beyond what now

looks like a small gravel pit located on the old Calgary and Edmonton trail immediately north of the Sandy Tugman place.

To this union were born four children, Charles, Archie, Jessie and George. Charles died while quite young.

Ephraim Aylwin later lived at Tees, Alberta, for a number of years, where he owned a considerable number of horses. Ephraim was very fond of horses and could still ride a horse until shortly before his death. He died in August, 1918 from the effects of a broken leg received while standing behind a gate, which a horse broke through injuring the elderly gentleman. He was predeceased by Mrs. Aylwin in 1907.

It is said that Mr. Aylwin's house north of Ponoka was built of the logs from Fort Ostell.

HORN AND STICKLER FAMILIES

Among the pioneers of Ponoka were John Peter Horn and his brother George, born in Burlington, Iowa. They, with a party of other young men left Hay Springs, Nebraska early in 1894 in a covered wagon and landed in Lacombe. Later they came on to Ponoka and took up adjoining homesteads, five and a half miles south of town.

Peter Stickler, two sons Alex and Peter and daughter Christina came from Manitoba in 1895 and they took up homesteads adjoining the Horn brothers. In 1896 Peter Horn married Christina Stickler. Two children were born of this marriage, Mary and Anton.

Peter Horn was likely the first blacksmith in town. He rode in on horse-back early each morning and back late at night. His wife had many lonely hours on the homestead, as well as fearful ones, with bears prowling around the old log shanty and Indians coming round searing her half to death.

Her brother, Alex, used to haul fish from Pigeon Lake to Algar's store. He was on his way for a load of fish when a terrible blizzard came up and he was lost for nine days or more. One horse died of exposure and the other had to be shot. They had eaten the tongue of the sleigh, they were so starved; yet Alex was able to call to the searchers when he saw them looking for him. He was taken to Edmonton hospital where he died January 3, 1898. His father was ill at the time and died just eight days later on January 11. The nearest doctor was Dr. Sharpe of Lacombe and the quickest way to get him when needed was on horse-back.

At one time the men folk were fighting a prairie fire when Peter heard a grunt behind him, and there was a bear standing up ready to grab him. He jumped over the fire he was beating out, and the bear slashed his overalls with his claws, ripping a leg all the way down. The fire was the only thing that saved him.

About 1900 Peter Horn moved his family in to town and in 1902 or 1903 he built a new blacksmith shop, with the Canadian Order of Foresters' Hall above it. Many shows, dances and even a "Fair" was held in the C.O.F. Hall in the old days.

Peter Horn served on the town council for a number of years and took an active part in community affairs. He gave up blacksmithing around 1920, renting his shop. Later the hall was taken off and "King's Welding" owns the shop at present.

Mrs. Horn died in September, 1938, and he in July, 1947. Peter Stickler died in 1942 and George in October 1946.

GEORGE P. FERGUSON

George P. Ferguson was born April 2, 1880, in Quebec, moving to South Dakota at an early age, and coming from there to Ponoka in 1899. He worked in a blacksmith shop, located immediately north of the present Ford Garage.

In 1900, George filed on a homestead in the Eastside district, with the S. B. Lucas homestead on the east and Howard Lucas on the north. Like many

other young men George didn't care for batching, so decided to take himself a wife. He and his choice, Mary Frances, second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Lucas, were married, October 24, 1906, and moved to the Old Indian Agency, where George was blacksmith for the Indians.

In 1908 the Department of Indian Affairs moved the blacksmith to the Agency at Hobbema, where George resided with his family until 1917. He then moved to his new farm east of Menaik and across the river, which became known as Bunker Hill.

After many years of hard work and raising a family of 12 children George retired, spending his retirement with his children. He passed away at the home of his daughter, Pat, in Edmonton on August 23, 1952. George was predeceased by Mary on November 6, 1943.

To this union were born eight boys and four girls, most of whom reside around Ponoka. They are: Walter, William, Amelia (Mrs. Fentie), Frank, Robert, and Terry, all of Ponoka; Harry (veterinarian, Lacombe), Fred, Kathleen (Mrs. Wilkie) Kamloops, Edith (Mrs. Gilmore Rosson) Ponoka, Pat (Mrs. Charles Farquhar) Edmonton, and John, Regina.

MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM HERBERT STRETCH

In April, 1899, Mr. and Mrs. Stretch and son, Jewel, arrived in Ponoka from White Broeking County, South Dakota, accompanied by Mrs. Stretch's brother Ed. Martin. At this time there were only three families residing in Ponoka, although there were many throughout the adjoining districts.

Mr. Stretch was taken out to look at land around Ponoka by the Dominion Land Guide, Cook Myer, who himself lived on a homestead. Mr. Stretch filed on the S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of 2-43-25, where he lived and raised his family of two boys and two girls until his retirement in 1944. He then moved to town, where he built a new home on Chipman Avenue in 1948.

Mr. Stretch was a member of the Agricultural Society for many years, showing stock at the Ponoka Fair, as well as in Edmonton, Calgary, and Lacombe. He served on the Board of Directors for the Ponoka Co-op store a number of years, also as a road councillor, taking a great interest in the improvement of the municipal roads.

In the early days Mrs. Stretch tells of doing such things as baking 100 pounds of flour at a time into bread for the sawmills near Ponoka.

The couple had four children: Jewel R. of Ponoka; Floyd H. of Ponoka; Lillah (Mrs. Wills, U.S.A.); Ruby (Mrs. W. S. White, Penticton, B.C.) Seven grandchildren and nine great grandchildren reside in the Ponoka district.

MR. AND MRS. JOE STRETCH

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Stretch, parents of W. H. Stretch, came to Ponoka about February, 1899. With them were their son Raymond and daughter May. For a time they lived on the quarter now owned by Norman McDonald.

Mr. Stretch was also in real estate for some time and Mrs. Stretch had a milliner shop in Ponoka, in a small building that stood where the present Rest Room stands. Mr. and Mrs. Stretch went to Eugene, Oregon, where they resided until Mr. Stretch's death. Mrs. Stretch remained there for a few years, took sick, and in May, 1936 she returned to Ponoka to reside with her son, Herb., until her death on January 9, 1941.

SAMUEL BISHOP ROBINSON

Mr. Robinson came to Canada from Ireland in 1885, arriving in Edmonton about 1891 and in 1892 he settled at Ponoka. He and Alexander Kennedy boarded with Ephraim Aylwin while building their own small homes.

The Robinson log house was built about two-and-a-half miles north of Ponoka (a little north and to the west of Coleman's Garage). This house was about 18 by 24, and the floor was made of split logs, hewn smooth. Mud was

used for chinking and the walls were plastered with clay. Shakes (shingles) and all the furniture were hand made.

After finishing the Robinson cabin the two men then built the Kennedy house west of Ponoka on a high hill. When Fritz Bachor bought the farm a number of years later, tunnels were found in the hill made by Mr. Kennedy in the very early days for protection for himself in case of attack by Indians.

In June, 1893, a son, Johnnie Robinson, came to Canada from Ireland. Six months later, Mrs. Robinson, four sons and three daughters arrived in Ponoka. They left their home in Ballynocken, County Down, Ireland, arriving in Ponoka December 3, 1893. At that time the only people in Ponoka were the section foreman and his wife, their home being in part of the station house.

The first winter the Robinson family, which consisted of Samuel and his wife Isabella (nee Harris) and children, lived in their small home. In these quarters the parents' bed was curtained off from the rest of the room, and above it hung a hammock for Jeanny. There was another portion of the room partitioned off for Lizzie and Nellie's bed and the boys slept in bunks.

In the spring a larger log house was built. This consisted of three rooms and a hall downstairs; upstairs there were four rooms. Partitions were made of factory cloth drawn very tight from the ceiling to the floor, newspapers were then pasted on both sides of this cotton.

The following year about 20 acres of land was cleared, plowed with oxen and sown by hand to oats. A very good crop was cut by scythe. Threshing was done with a flail and the first crop was also cleaned by hand in the wind.

In 1904 they moved to Lloydminster and Kitseoty, moving the stock and household effects across country. They also took some lumber from Ponoka tied into rafts and floated down the Battle River.

Children of the pioneer couple were: David, Hughie, Johnnie, Andrew, and Lizzie (Mrs. R. J. McCue), all deceased; Samuel, in Australia; Eleanor (Mrs. A. A. Johnston); and Jeannie (Mrs. R. Edwards) of British Columbia.

THE REID BROTHERS

Among the first settlers of the Ponoka district were the Reid brothers, William, Andrew, Joseph and David.

William arrived in 1893 and took up land four miles northwest of the townsite. He married Miss Emma Tyner of Ferrybank in 1899. A short time later they moved to British Columbia. In 1895, Andrew filed a homestead one mile west of Ponoka. He married Anna A. Larsen in 1900 and following her death in 1919, he later married Miss Jonina L. Goodman.

Joseph and David arrived in the district in 1898. Joseph settled on land five miles northwest of town and married Mary C. Larsen in 1903, while David moved on to Oregon after about two years in the district.

JAMES AND HENRY DICK

James and Henry Dick came to Ponoka from Minnesota in 1899. They were followed three years later by a brother, Robert, and a sister, Mrs. Frank Scott.

James settled on a homestead in the Dennis district while Henry lived in the area several years before moving to Vancouver. The Robert Dick and Scott families settled on farms east of town where they played an important part in the early community life of the district.

JACOB F. LEEK

In May, 1885, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob F. Leek and five children ranging in age from ten to one year, began the long trip overland from central Nebraska with two covered wagons loaded with personal belongings, seven head of horses and five cows.

Throughout most of the distance the trail was hardly distinguishable; some rivers had to be forded, horses swimming and wagons floating. The



Ponoka's station was built in 1892-3, following closely upon the railway itself. At that time there were no other buildings at all at Siding 14. The station was built to house the section crew and the 'caretaker' who looked after the windmill which was used to pump the water from the river to the water tower. At one time in 1895 there were more than a dozen men living in the station with the stationmaster's family, because there was no other accommodation available. The first stationmaster was T. J. West.

average distance covered in one week was 100 miles with a stop-over from Saturday noon until Monday morning to rest animals, bake bread and wash clothing.

Four months after starting, having encountered no serious mishaps, the family arrived at Fort Macleod, Alberta, where they were detained for two weeks for animal inspection. They then proceeded as far as Bowden where they were forced by weather to spend the winter.

In April, 1896, Jake Leek and his family arrived in Ponoka and settled on a homestead two miles south of the town where Mr. Leek resided until his death in 1932. He was predeceased by Mrs. Leek in 1902. One child, Melton, presently living at Fort Saskatchewan, was born at Ponoka.

Of the five children beginning the long journey in 1895 three are still living: Ethel, Mrs. W. W. Warnock of Castor; Arthur, of Calgary; and Katie, Mrs. C. C. Watson, of Vancouver, B.C. One son, Harden, died in Edmonton in 1952 and another son, Everett, was killed in an accident at Vernon, B.C. in 1951.

THOMAS WILLIAM LUCAS

Thomas William Lucas, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Lucas, came west in 1881 with his parents, sister Emma, brother Howard, an aunt and uncle, Frank and Maggie Lucas, and an uncle, James Aylwin.

His first schooling was under a governess, after which he was sent to the mission at St. Albert. Later, he and his sister, Emma, were sent to Ottawa to further their education. Mr. Lucas returned to Ponoka at the age of 18 years. In 1893, he went on his father's homestead at Twin Lakes, four miles east of Ponoka, where he resided until 1897, when his father returned from the Sarnee Indian Reserve.

In 1896, Mr. Lucas filed on a homestead located on the N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of 10-43-25, between his father's home and the town. He soon decided that batching was no life for him, so on September 17, 1902, he took as his bride Eleanor Bishop Robinson. They lived on the homestead until January, 1903, when Mr. Lucas became farm instructor at the Old Indian Agency, about six miles south of Hobbema. In April, 1915, the family moved back to Twin Lakes. The homestead had been sold to Ed. Hinkley so William acquired the homesteads of his

brother Howard, his brother-in-law George Ferguson, and his father, S. B. Lucas.

As a boy, William played with Indian children and mixed with them as a man. He learned to speak the Cree language as well as any Indian and was looked upon as a brother. If in need of help, the Indians would come to Will Lucas. He dealt with them for many years, selling to them, buying and trading.

In the fall of 1918 the family moved to town because of Will's health. They remained there for 15 months, during which time the place was farmed by Clyde Dewhurst. Back to the farm in the spring of 1920, Will and Nellie became fox-minded and in 1921 purchased three pair of silver foxes from F. M. Lee. As the years passed, the three pair increased to about 20 pair. At one time there were coyotes dug out of their den and kept in fox pens until pelting season, as well as some badger, coon and chinchilla rabbits. Fur farming continued along with mixed farming until 1939, when Mrs. Lucas sold all but four pair.

About 1930, Will took over mail route No. 1, followed by other routes. By 1935 the mail had become a full time job, so the family moved into town, living on the outskirts known as Lucas Heights. While on one of his mail routes, Mr. Lucas took sick and passed away at his home on Lucas Heights on the morning of September 22, 1937. Mrs. Lucas has resided in the district since.

Seven girls and one boy were born to Mr. and Mrs. Lucas. These were: Amy Isabella (Mrs. Floyd Stretch); Marjorie Amelia (deceased); Clara May (Mrs. Donald Eastwood); Howard Samuel; Eleanor Mary (Mrs. Paul DeLong); Emma Louisa (Mrs. Jack Malin); Doris Evelyn (Mrs. Gerald Russell); and Francis Gertrude (Mrs. Amos Sweet).

Mrs. Lucas married an old time friend, Alexander Johnston, in Vancouver on February 6, 1942. The couple came back to Ponoka and resided in the home on Lucas Heights where Mr. Johnston suddenly passed away on April 25, 1951.

Besides her seven living children, Mrs. (Lucas) Johnston has 23 grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

ROBERT JOHN McCUE

Robert John McCue, of Kincardine, Bruce County, Ontario, came west in 1885, just after the Riel Rebellion. He worked for a short time in Calgary, following which he drove the stage or mail coach between Calgary and Edmonton. He had a stopping place on Wolf Creek between Ponoka and Lacombe, where he supplied change of horses for the mail and stage.

Here he also traded with the Indians for furs, and once, after a particularly good business, he danced until three or four in the morning with \$2,000 tucked in the sole of his moccasins. Once, he traded 12 white shirts to some Indians who put them on and raced away at full speed. The wind, swelling those shirts out, caused the scattering of the horses which were being rounded up. It took days to get the animals collected again.

Another time, when the ice went out on the Red Deer river, he had to swim and lead the team across. They just got out as the ice jam came together. Mr. McCue then drove 14 miles in wet clothes and, when he arrived home, his moustache was a mass of icicles and his clothing frozen stiff.

While he was batching, a man named Tom Lylack put some rice in the oven to cook. Every time he looked at it, the pail was full, so he kept taking some out and putting it into other pans. Soon every pan in the place was full of pudding. Then, knowing that there were only two of them to eat it, he laughingly suggested that they give it to the Indians and if it swelled up in them like it did in the pans, "it would kill every d—d one of them."

Mr. McCue's first place was burned and he lost all of his personal belongings. He then built the house which is now occupied by the Poffenroth

sisters. He married Mary Elizabeth Robinson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Robinson, on August 7, 1895.

There were eight children born to the couple—two of which were buried on the farm. A daughter, Mrs. E. Lutman, now living in New Westminster, B.C., and a son, Clarence, of Lethbridge, also were born at this farm. Other children still living include: Mrs. Sue Smith of Burnaby, B.C.; Mrs. William Glanville of Burnaby; and R. J. McCue of Edmonton.

In 1901, the McCues moved into Ponoka where he built a home. Mr. McCue and Mr. Sellers built the Leland Hotel, with Mr. McCue selling out in 1904. The family then moved to Vermilion where he built the Alberta Hotel and operated it until 1911 or 1912. They moved to a small acreage near Edmonton and finally to Burnaby, B.C. in about 1939, where the pioneer couple passed away.

THE W. E. TURNER FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Turner and their family of three boys and a girl came to Ponoka from Benkelman, Nebraska, in 1900. Another boy and another girl were born here.

Mr. Turner was a Massey-Harris agent in Ponoka for 22 years. The family lived on a farm three-and-a-half miles east of town and Mr. Turner used to drive in to work every day in a buggy.

Mr. Turner was also the justice of the peace for Ponoka, and lived in town for the last seven years of his life until his death in 1931.

Four children survive: W. H. Turner, who is an attendant at Provincial Mental Hospital, Ponoka; John W. Turner of Ponoka, who is a cattle buyer;



The first frame school in Ponoka was built in 1901 and served the town for many years. Generation upon generation of children passed through its doors, and many oldtimers (and those not so old) will remember it. It was situated in the block just west of where the United Church now stands.

Cora Belle Turner, a retired nurse who is living in Tucson, Arizona with Mr. Turner's 92-year-old widow; Arabella Turner, who is married and living in Tucson.

TOM COOPER

Tom Cooper came from the old country in 1914, was married in 1915. He worked for the blacksmith, Mr. Pete Horn. He was on the fire brigade for years and also served on the town council. He went into business for himself in the early twenties in the Herb Rees blacksmith shop, and then in the old Bright shop (east of the old post office) where the anvil rang for many years. He died in 1950 but his wife still resides here with their children here and in the district.

DAVE JONES

Mr. Jones moved here from Edmonton in 1914 to become a P.M.H. attendant. He married the next year. In 1917 he became the town policeman which position he held for eight years. He went into the electrical business which one of his sons carries on. He is presently employed at the P.M.H. again.

MR. AND MRS. GILLIS GOODMAN

Mr. and Mrs. Gillis Goodman arrived in Ponoka with their family in November of 1895. There was nothing here at that time except the station house.

Mr. Goodman was the section foreman for the C.P.R. and he and his family—Dora, Lawrence, Bertha and Gillis—lived in the station until 1900. In that year, owing to a strike, Mr. Goodman bought a farm and moved his family there for a year. In 1901 the family moved back to Ponoka and built the home on 48th Avenue where Mrs. Fate now lives. Mr. Goodman lived in Ponoka for 30 years until he retired in 1925.

The only surviving member of the family, Mrs. J. Purnell (Dora) recalls that in 1895 there was no stationmaster—just a crew of section hands during the summer, and remembers clearly the two trains a week between Calgary and Edmonton.



How Ponoka Grew

The growth of Ponoka from a settlement to a village and finally to a thriving town is reflected in these official figures of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ottawa. It may be noticed that the town suffered two setbacks in its 50 year history—between 1911 to 1916, and from 1926 to 1931.

| | |
|--------|---------------|
| 1901 — | 151 persons |
| 1906 — | 473 persons |
| 1911 — | 642 persons |
| 1916 — | 604 persons |
| 1921 — | 712 persons |
| 1926 — | 842 persons |
| 1931 — | 836 persons |
| 1936 — | 1,045 persons |
| 1941 — | 1,306 persons |
| 1946 — | 1,468 persons |
| 1951 — | 2,574 persons |

The municipal census taken in 1953 showed that the population had shot up over the 3,000 mark for the first time. It was recorded officially as 3,244.

Ponoka's Churches

As soon as homes were built, the early settlers turned their thoughts to church and school. It was not long before Ponoka had several active church congregations, which have grown steadily throughout the years.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH

In 1901, ten people gathered in the old log school house to form a church. They were: C. D. Algar, R. K. Allan, J. W. Tulk, Mrs. W. A. Snider, Mrs. W. H. Spackman, Mrs. R. K. Allan, Mrs. J. Tulk, Mrs. N. E. Ledgerwood, Mrs. J. Hollycroft and Mrs. Greffen. Rev. F. W. Patterson was in the chair.

About the end of 1903, J. E. Pengelly was called to the pastorate, and the mission circle was formed on December 6. In 1908 the first Sunday school was held, with F. E. Algar as superintendent.

In 1914 the Concord field was organized. Through the 1920's the church slowly grew but it was not until 1943 that it became financially independent. In 1950 the present enlarged church building was dedicated and new pews bought. A young women's mission circle was also formed then.

In May of 1954 the church's 50th anniversary was celebrated and the congregation took pride in the fact that more than \$2,000 had been sent to mission work.

PONOKA UNITED CHURCH

The earliest locally known origin of the work of the United Church in Ponoka and the surrounding area dates back to the year 1879, when Samuel Lucas, surveyor and Indian Agent at Peace Hills, came into the country. At that time, Rev. E. B. Glass, a Methodist missionary, was stationed on the Stony Reserve, six miles southwest of Ponoka. In addition to his work among the native tribes, he held services in the homes of the early settlers.

In June 1895, a meeting was held in the railway depot for the purpose of organizing regular worship services. At this meeting, Rev. John Fernie, a Scotch Presbyterian minister from Lacombe, was present to advise and assist.

A committee was appointed, namely: Alex. Kennedy (chairman), J. McCue, S. B. Robinson, D. B. Robinson, J. Barr, Wm. and Andrew Reid (secretary). Soon the committee had plans formulated for obtaining one thousand dollars for the church and manse building. However the amount they received was actually sixty dollars. With \$14.75, they bought the lots on which the Central Alberta Dairy Pool now stands.

Among them they got out logs and erected a building sixteen by twenty-four. The best logs were taken to Mr. Kennedy, who was the superintendent of the Sunday school, then being held in the station. He made twenty-five fine seats, all by hand. These seats are still in use in the primary department of the United Church.

By May, 1896, the church was ready. Mr. Fernie could not come on Sundays, so Presbyterian services were held on Wednesday evenings. Mr. German the Methodist missionary (successor to Rev. Glass) held services Sunday afternoons, and Bishop Kinkham came from Calgary once a month. Everyone attended all services regardless of denomination.

In 1900, the Methodist Church was built and was dedicated in January 1901 by Rev. T. C. Buchanan, superintendent of Missions. There was seating capacity for about two hundred persons. Rev. T. P. Perry was the first pastor of this new church. In connection with his work in Ponoka, he carried on out-

of-town work also at Eastside, Earlville and Grand Meadow. The first trustee board consisted of F. W. Tracy, W. L. Steele, F. M. Lee, F. M. Haley, R. F. Chapman, G. F. Albrecht, and was formed in 1907. Other out-of-town points added later were Hazel Hill, Arbor Park and P.M.H.

In 1903, the old log church having been out-grown, the Presbyterians built a new church on the site of the present United Church, dedicated in November by Rev. G. D. McQueen, of Edmonton. Rev. J. A. Mair was in charge, and was Ponoka's first resident ordained minister. The two churches carried on independently until 1916, when they became united as Ponoka Union Church. Rev. Wesley Winkin, the Methodist minister, was in charge of both congregations with services first held in the Methodist Church. It was not for nine years that the United Church of Canada came into being.

In 1927, the Presbyterian Church was remodelled and enlarged, and the Methodist Church was used for a number of years as a gymnasium and rallying centre for youth groups, also as a banquet hall, until in 1935, it was found necessary to sell this church building, the Methodist parsonage and the United Church Manse. A manse was then built on the church property. This pastorate was enlarged by the addition of Zion, Wood River, and Dakota churches.

The work of the United Church was carried on in the Presbyterian Church until 1951, when it was torn down and the present fine \$80,000 church 90x42 feet, was erected, with a spacious recreation hall adjoining, and numerous well-equipped classrooms, including a nursery, modern kitchen, and a spacious parlour.

The cornerstone was laid in September by Rev. Robert Christie, of Vancouver, secretary, Social Service and Evangelism, and predecessor to Rev. W. E. Burgess, present minister. On December 16th, the dedication service was conducted by Rev. E. J. Thompson of Edmonton, Principal of St. Stephen's College. This new church building is already used to capacity even to the extent of holding duplicate services on church-festivals.

FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH

The first work of this church was begun in the Ponoka area in 1903 by pastor V. Gruber. He was followed by pastor J. Meyer, who lived in Ponoka for a time. In 1909 Rev. O. H. Schmidt came to serve here. At that time he had to serve eight preaching stations and spent only two days every three weeks in Ponoka. Services were held in the home of Mr. C. Schmidt.

Shortly after this the active work of the church was dropped in Ponoka, as most of the congregation had moved away. It was not until 1934 that services were again held in Ponoka with pastor A. Appelt in charge.

On August 12, 1951, Rev. W. Schoepp, the present pastor, was installed and regular Sunday services begun, with a Sunday school and adult Bible class.

In February of the next year a loan was secured for the provision of a church. A building was purchased and moved into Ponoka, and since that time members of the congregation have willingly spent time building the basement and adding the furnishings. It is hoped that the growth of the church and the congregation will continue in the future upon the foundation already laid.

ST. MARY'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Prior to 1903, intermittent Anglican services were held in the station house, and the parish of St. Mary's was founded on July 7th of that year.

For the next 11 years services were held in various buildings in town: over the Co-op Store (which was then on Railway street), in a log building where the C.A.D.P. now stands; in the Foresters' Hall over Horn's blacksmith

shop; and in the Presbyterian Church, which was on the site of the present United Church.

In 1904 land was purchased for a church, but the building was not begun until 1914. Cost of the land (the present site) was \$140. The first wedding in the church was solemnized on February 17, 1914; the first baptism on April 19.

On Sunday, May 31, of that year the little church was consecrated by Bishop Grey of Edmonton.

In 1923 an addition was completed, and the present parish hall was built in 1928. Presently there are plans afoot to construct a new hall immediately to the north of the present building.

From 1914 until the present, services have been conducted by the following ministers: Rev. R. W. Alexander, Rev. A. Murphy, Rev. A. L. Harkness, Rev. W. J. James, Rev. A. A. Adams, Rev. D. McQueen, Rev. P. C. Wade, Rev. A. M. Trendall, Rev. A. Murphy, Rev. W. M. Nainby, Rev. W. T. Elkin, Rev. F. A. Peake, and Rev. F. E. Smith of Wetaskiwin, who is the present minister.

During the past 50 years this parish, like many other rural parishes, has had its ups and downs. Finances have provided most of the downs, but owing to splendid co-operation of the parishioners, the women's auxiliaries and other church organizations it has been able to weather the storm.

OUR SAVIOR'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

The first service for the Evangelical Lutheran Church was held in the summer of 1950, with student Curtis Satre taking charge. In January of 1951, Rev. A. E. Dahlen came to Ponoka and on March 11 of that year the church was organized. It had a charter membership of 54 persons at the time, and has been growing steadily since.

The present pastor is Rev. J. E. Haugen, who came in July of 1953. Most of the members are of Scandinavian descent, but the church is English speaking.

Services have been held at St. Mary's Anglican Church in Ponoka, and also in the Bowker and Bascom Funeral Chapel. It is hoped that a church may be built this year. A modern parsonage is presently under construction.

The Ponoka parish of the Evangelical Lutheran Church also includes Asker Lutheran Church, 16 miles east of town, with a membership of 132; and Bentley Lutheran, west of Bentley, with a membership of 86.

CHURCH OF THE OPEN BIBLE

In March, 1947 the Church of the Open Bible was organized in Ponoka under the Associated Gospel Churches of Canada, with Rev. Carl Pearson as pastor. Until December of 1951 the congregation met in the Co-op. Hall. The present pastor, Rev. D. W. Hogman assumed duties in October 1951.

In June 1952 the congregation moved into a basement construction on Riverside. Progress has been steady and encouraging, and 1954 will see completion of the upper story of the building.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The first priest to visit the few scattered Catholics in the Ponoka district was Rev. Father Lizée of Hobbema and later he was succeeded by Rev. Father Dauphin. Mass was usually said in the house of Mr. Kennedy, two miles to the northwest of Ponoka. A little later Rev. Father Dubois also came to provide religious services. These were held at that time in the Royal Hotel, which belonged to Mr. Laurendeau and was kept by Mr. Camille Miquelon.

From 1902 on, services were held every third Sunday of each month in

the C.O.F. Hall, first by Rev. Father Vandendaele and afterwards by Rev. Father Van Wetten. In 1904, steps were taken to secure four town lots upon which to erect the future church. In 1907, a subscription list was opened and the sum of \$700 realized. All the wood for the framework of the new church was given by J. Hageman and in 1908 the construction work was started. Confirmation took place in the building on July 27, 1909.

That building served until 1950 when the handsome Gothic-styled new church was erected to a design by Father Harrison. The church is a large one and has a full basement with a stage, and kitchen facilities.

The business committee for the building program consisted of Father Harrison, chairman; and V. Maloney, L. C. Morrisroe, K. Abt, R. Galvin, G. Badry and B. Fink.

Between 1902 and 1922 there were several priests in charge at Ponoka. They included Father Van Wetten of Ledue, who was here for a number of years. He was succeeded by Father Vandendaele and Father Delestre. Then Father Van Wetten served again, followed by Father Dubois. Father Graydon Harrison came west from Toronto in 1922 and has been in charge ever since.

DANISH LUTHERAN CHURCH (Ponoka)

As far back as 1925 there was a Danish Lutheran congregation, supported by an association in Denmark (The Danish Church in Foreign Countries). During the war money could not be sent over from there, so it then was supported by the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in the U.S.A.

From 1947 the church again has been supported by the Danish Church in Foreign Countries, and gets its ministers from the Sister Church in Edmonton. The name of the present minister is P. Overgaard Thomsen, and he comes to Ponoka the first and third Sundays of every month.

For a long time services were alternatively preached in the Danish and English language, but the past few years it has been only in Danish on account of the many young Danish immigrants who are coming to the district and who do not understand English when they arrive here.

The attendance in 1953 was an average of 45 persons.

For a number of years the congregation used the United Church, and after that the Baptist Church, and for the last many years the Anglican Church.

Since the mid-thirties the pastors have been:

?-36 Pastor Normesen, 1936-40 Pastor Hallkneck, 1940-43 Pastor Schultz, 1943-44 Pastor Matthiesen, 1944-46 Pastor Thorslev, 1947-?? Pastor Overgaard Thomsen.



TALE OF THE DOGS

About 1911 the town first began to license dogs. The local policeman, an officious chap by the name of John Schnor, was particularly careful to see that every available pooch was carrying a tag. Someone, sensing the chance for a bit of fun, told the arm of the law that shoemaker H. I. Jones had two dogs hidden in the back of his shop.

Intent on a thorough investigation, constable Schnor invaded Mr. Jones' premises and demanded to see the untagged canines. The shoemaker, realizing that one of his friends was pulling a fast one, escorted the cop into the back of his shop. There they were: two very large china dogs which the Jones family had carefully brought all the way from Wales! They are still among the family's most cherished possessions.

The Provincial Mental Hospital



In 1912 the Provincial Mental Hospital building program was completed in its initial phase. Here is a picture taken that year, showing the complete layout. Contrast this with today's massive structures sprawling over many acres—and framed in beautiful trees and spreading lawns.

A factor in the town's growth which must not be overlooked is the Provincial Mental Hospital, whose buildings dominate a large area of land south-east of town. It was only three years after the formation of the province in 1905 that the government began to consider establishment of such an institution to care for the new province's mentally ill citizens.

Through the efforts of local citizens, the fact that Ponoka is centrally located in the province, and after a personal inspection by Premier Rutherford in 1908, Ponoka became the chosen site.

Construction began in the fall of 1908, but the institution was not officially opened until July 4, 1911. It consisted of the present central three-storey building and a few other smaller buildings. Sixteen patients were admitted the first month and 164 patients were received from the Brandon hospital. Today the hospital has about 1,600 patients and a staff of 450—making a significant contribution to the growth and stability of the town.

From that small beginning, growth has been continuous. In 1912 a male patient ward was opened; three years later three wards for female patients completed. Throughout the next 15 years the building program continued. The recreation hall was opened in 1928 and three more wards in 1930. The economic depression of the 1930's curtailed further expansion, but it was resumed after the war. In 1948 a second farm dormitory was opened and more recently two new buildings for men—Eastview and Dawnview. Renovation of the old ward 4 building is currently underway.

Ponoka can justly claim to be the centre of the province's widespread mental health program, comprising in all six institutions, two child guidance clinics and travelling clinics the length and breadth of the province.

Forms of treatment have kept pace with the growth of the institution. Hydrotherapy has been used since the beginning. Malarial therapy for treatment of syphilis of the nervous system was begun in 1924 and was used continuously for 26 years. It was discarded in 1952 and penicillin and electric fever therapy substituted.

All forms of mechanical restraint were abolished in this hospital in 1937—a fact that may come as a surprise to many people, and an indication of the progress made in mental health treatment from the early days of mere confinement to the present when the emphasis is on healing.

In 1937 insulin therapy was inaugurated but had to be discontinued during the second world war because of shortage of medical staff. It was re-in-

stituted in 1947 and has been used with success on selected groups. Electro-shock therapy was begun in 1943 and has become one of the major forms of present-day control and cure of mental illness. It is used extensively.

Other new phases of treatment are occupational therapy, recreational therapy, physical and group therapy and dance therapy.

In 1931 the first psychiatric training for nurses and attendants was started. The next year a program of postgraduate training for registered nurses was added. In 1933 the senate of the University of Alberta approved the hospital as a training school for nurses. The course consists of two years at Ponoka, followed by two years' affiliation with general hospitals in Calgary or Edmonton.

The first class of five nurses graduated in 1935 and has been followed by a class each year since then. In 1954 there were 25 graduates.

Teaching facilities and the training program have been enlarged and improved each year. The graduates of the Ponoka Mental Hospital are recognized wherever they go for their efficiency and understanding in the care of the mentally ill.

The hospital is a city unto itself. It has a fire brigade, a telephone exchange, a printing and bookbinding shop, a beauty parlor, a medical hospital and dental department—and of course a great deal of equipment of specific use in mental treatment. It has a huge laundry, bakeshop, great kitchens, its own power plant for heat and light.

It runs one of the largest farms in the province. It has a fine herd of Holstein cattle, hundreds of pigs, even a colony of bees. Nearly 100 acres of potatoes are planted each year. The chicken farm has an average population of more than 10,000 birds.

Here are a few figures of produce grown or raised in 1953: milk, 779,783 lbs.; cream, 4,925 quarts; 402,000 dozen eggs; 31,190 lbs. of poultry; 122,489 lbs. of pork.

In 1953 the institution's cannery provided the hospital with 13,113 gallon tins of fruit, 1,407 tins of vegetables, and 91 gallon jars of pickles. About 10,000 gallon tins were supplied to other mental institutions in Alberta.

At the beginning of 1954 the staff totalled nearly 450 persons, and the payroll was calculated at \$1,022,541 yearly—which does not include the public works staff.



The Mail Went Through

For 16 years Mr. B. F. Craig hauled the mail from Ponoka to Bluff Centre, between the years 1901 and 1917. He was the most regular mailman you could imagine. He arrived so regularly that people used to set their time by his arrival.

In all those 16 years Mr. Craig missed only two trips. And mind you those trips were made over trails, through swamp, river, wood and plain. And the two trips that he missed were because bridges were washed out over the rivers. On each occasion that he didn't make the trip he drowned his team trying.

Surely this is a record to be proud of. In this year of 1954, the people in that district went for three weeks without mail because the mailman couldn't get through. How times have changed.

Ponoka Clubs and Lodges

PONOKA KINSMEN CLUB

The Association of Kinsmen Clubs is a strictly Canadian organization of young business and professional men, established in 1920 to do service work across the Dominion. Being a young association, it wasn't until 1941 that on charter from the Red Deer Club, the Kinsmen Club of Ponoka was founded, with a membership of fifteen interested would-be Kinsmen.

Headed by President G. G. Ranks and his executive of Dr. J. M. Byers, W. McIntosh and S. Dineen and honorary president, Dr. R. R. MacLean the club commenced wholeheartedly the activities by which it was to serve Ponoka and district. At that time a national project was "Milk for the Children of Britain," and through "Hallowe'en Shell Out" and other money raisers, hundreds of quarts of milk were contributed overseas from the community.

When war ended the efforts of the club were expended on community service work—the "Community's Greatest Need." Several small but important projects were fulfilled, but it wasn't until plans for the arena were adopted and action started that the members of the club felt that they were really doing something worthwhile. For a time all energies were expended on this project, and while the Kinsmen Club's name is no longer connected with the arena, that building has become a reality in Ponoka. Today the arena board still has two representatives from the Kinsmen Club.

While the tempo has slackened somewhat, the present club of thirty-five carries on its service work—playgrounds receiving the most attention. Many of the local members have taken office in the district executive, and at present the district governor, Mickey Carter and his officers are members of the local club responsible to the Province of Alberta. The Kinsmen Club of Ponoka, has always taken an active interest in the welfare of the community and through service will serve Ponoka for Ponoka.

PONOKA KINETTE CLUB

The Ponoka Kinette Club came into being November 8, 1948. Its initial purpose was to aid the Kinsmen in their many fine endeavors. The Kinettes have representatives on the C.N.I.B., Hospital Auxiliary, Cemetery Association and the Playground. They have given all of these organizations generous help whenever they have been called upon.

Since 1951 the Kinettes have canvassed for the annual Cancer Crusade. Ponoka and District can be proud of the fact that since 1951 they have held top place for all of the districts in Alberta of comparative size.

The Kinettes have now embarked on a new project that of assisting the patients in the Provincial Mental Hospital.

THE PONOKA LIONS CLUB

The Ponoka Lions Club was formed in November, 1948 and on December 14, 1948, at a banquet and ceremony, they were presented with their charter by District Governor, Lion A. G. Kustine, of Edmonton.

The prime objective in forming a club was to create a better relationship between town and country, while being of service to the community.

The first executive consisted of our first president and organizer—Norm MacLeod, vice-president—Doug Bresee, 2nd vice-president—Bruce McDonald, 3rd vice-president—Trevor Jenkins, secretary-treasurer—Reese Jones, Lion Tamer—Don Hoar, Tail Twister—Jack Hoar, Directors—Emil Tiltgen, Mike Bures, Jim Easton and Roy Brawn.

Some of the projects the Lions Club have participated in are: Central playground, arena floor, Mecca Glen skating rink, Ferrybank and Calumet curling rinks and benevolent cases.

They also fully equipped a room at the hospital; canvassed for the Red

Cross; sponsored the Ponoka Midget Hockey team.

This summer they are undertaking the biggest project yet, donating most of the money for the concrete floor in the arena.

BRITANNIA LODGE NO. 18, A.F. & A.M.

Britannia Lodge No. 18, A.F. & A.M. was instituted under dispensation on January 31, 1905, Bro. C. M. Campbell being the first Master, and the following were charter members: C. M. Campbell, A. B. Rowley, W. R. Courtwright, W. E. Turner, W. A. Brodie, J. A. Jackson, T. J. West, R. H. Fairley, T. J. Durkin, A. Reid, C. F. Carson and J. Atkinson.

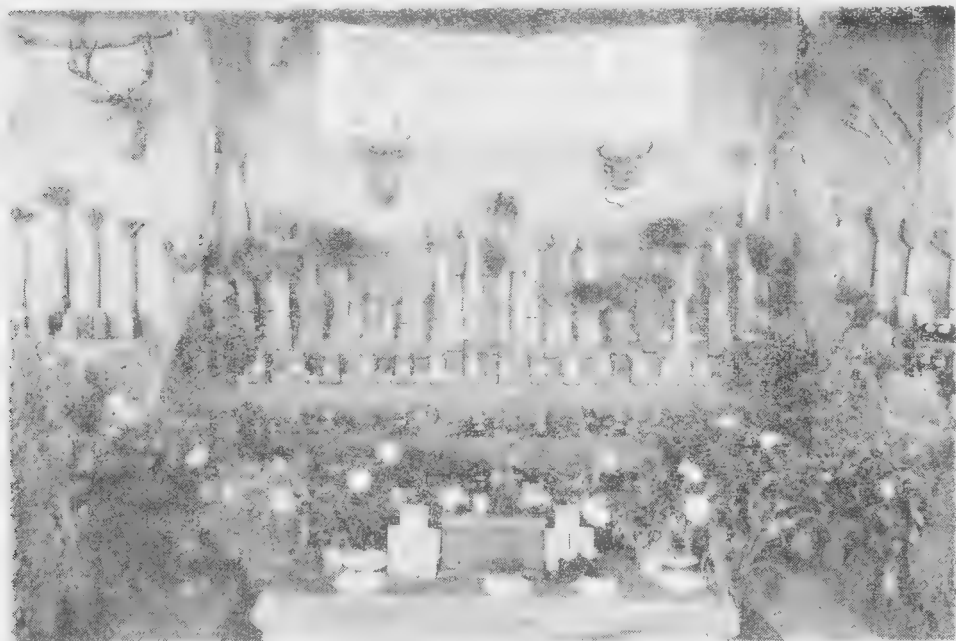
Arrangements were made with the Independent Order of Oddfellows to use their hall for meetings. On March 12, 1905 a fire broke out in the hall and the Lodge suffered considerable loss through the destruction of its furniture.

Fortunately the Lodge records were kept in the home of the secretary, Bro. T. J. West and were thus preserved. Within four days after the fire, accommodation was found over Bro. A. Reid's store on Donald Avenue, and the Lodge continued to meet there until 1949, when, owing to the premises being needed by the Ponoka Co-operative Association, the Lodge moved to the Legion Hall.

On June 15, 1905 the Lodge was granted a Charter under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba. When the Grand Lodge of Alberta was constituted the lodge applied for and was granted a charter under its jurisdiction, on October 12, 1905. Through the years the lodge has grown with the town, and today is in a very healthy condition.

WOMEN OF THE MOOSE, CHAPTER NO. 1313

The Women of the Moose, Ponoka Chapter 1313, was instituted October 5, 1952, with 30 members. The following officers were installed: Graduate Regent, Hannah McGuire; Sr. Regent, Lula Jensen; Jr. Regent, Anne Laycraft;



Ponoka's reputation as an agricultural district received recognition year after year at district fairs in Alberta. This prize display shown at the Edmonton Fair in 1919, is a fine example of local crops, garden produce and fruits.

Chaplain, Faye Newton; Treasurer, Mae Doyle; Recorder, Edna Grierson; Guide, Mona Moller; Assistant Guide, Grace Turner; Argus, Irene Young; Sentinel, Myrtie Long; Pianist, Joanne Jones.

The aim of the Chapter is to support Mooseheart, the Child City, and Moosehaven, the home for the aged.

PONOKA STAGETTE CLUB

On February 1, 1944 the Ponoka Stagette Club was organized with fourteen members—June Birch, Marion Hueston, Nellie Harris, Blanche Nelson, Erna Block, Clara Anderson, Blanche Tees, Dorothy Dick, June Fate, Isabel MacKenzie, Dorothy Patterson, Barbara Prochaska, Lois Young and Jean MacDonald.

In the early years of the organization the girls devoted most of their time and funds to war work.

The main project of the club is Child Welfare work. The Stagettes have assisted considerably with the children's ward and library at the Municipal Hospital, local playgrounds and scout hall; also they have provided hampers and milk to needy families in Ponoka. For the past ten years the club has sent food parcels each Christmas to a school in the worst slum area in London, England, the Maidstone Street School.

In the past few years donations have been made annually to—The Canadian Red Cross, C.N.I.B., Polio Fund, Cancer Fund, Woods Christian Home and Unitarian Service. Besides these, this year the Stagettes have helped finance the Well Baby Clinic, operated by the A.A.R.N. and also donated to the Dr. Younge Memorial Fund.

One of the Stagettes' main projects this year is the Bethany Home situated eight miles east of Wetaskiwin. This home is for children from broken homes and is operated by Rev. H. R. Jestpersen, his wife and assistants, who donate their services voluntarily. At the present time there are 41 children in the home which is non-denominational and supported wholly by donations from interested organizations and individuals.

The Stagette Club canvasses for blood donors twice yearly and assists with the tag day for the C.N.I.B. Each fall they sponsor a do-nut sale during National Stagette Week. During the winter months they handle the concession booth in the local arena.

FORT OSTEAL CHAPTER, I.O.D.E.

Fort Ostell Chapter, I.O.D.E. was organized in March, 1929, with ten charter members.

Besides strong support for all the projects of the national and provincial chapters in education and welfare, the chapter maintains a splendid library in Ponoka and assists with various community enterprises, particularly in the



We give you the girls—of 1912. Illustrating the dress of the day, this group of Ponoka girls posed while on a picnic. Note the bottle of stone ginger beer held by Bella Grey and Lorraine McLean. Others are L to R—Eula Foisey, Jennie Hambly, Lizzie Donovan, Lillie Hambly, Esther Johnson.

field of education.

Charter members: Mrs. F. Edwards, Mrs. J. C. Matheson, Mrs. Caven. Mrs. A. Beaumont, Mrs. J. Buchanan, Mrs. F. Lane, and Mrs. A. G. Willson.

BATTLE RIVER CHAPTER NO. 47, O.E.S.

A chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star with charter membership of 29 was instituted at Ponoka, February 23, 1922, through the untiring efforts of Mrs. Margaret Smith, who became its first Worthy Matron.

The local organization took its name from the historic river winding its way through Ponoka and became "Battle River Chapter No. 47, Order of the Eastern Star."

This organization through the years has quietly carried on its beneficent, cultural and social activities, ever ready to assist in welfare and community enterprises both locally and provincially.

The chapter now lists approximately 80 members and meets the third Thursday of each month at 8 p.m. in the Legion Hall, Ponoka.

ORDER OF THE ROYAL PURPLE

Order of the Royal Purple No. 27, was instituted in Ponoka on the 16th day of September, 1927, by Supreme Honored Royal Lady Grevith of Calgary. Assisting her were ladies of the Wetaskiwin Lodge No. 23, along with Bro. George Coate of Ponoka Lodge No. 102. There were 29 charter members with Linica Morgan as Honored Royal Lady. Three of these are still on the roll call: P.H.R.L. Rachel Farrell, P.H.R.L. Ellen Cooper and Jennie Jones.

RIVERSIDE GOOD NEIGHBOR CLUB

Riverside Good Neighbor Club was organized about four years ago as a social group. Since that time they have been instrumental in getting the Riverside playground started, supplying some of the equipment.

CONSTITUENCY MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

Dr. McLeod of Ferintosh became the first member of the Provincial Legislature for this constituency. He was followed by Dr. Campbell in 1909. Mr. Charles Cunningham, a Conservative, was elected in 1917. When the Farmer's Government was swept into power in the summer of 1921, Mr. Percy Baker was elected to represent Ponoka. Unfortunately he was killed before the government was formed. During the time the U.F.A. government was in power, Ponoka was represented by the premier of the province, at first Mr. Greenfield then Mr. Brownlee.

In 1935 the Social Credit party named Mrs. Edith Rogers as candidate for Ponoka. She was successful when the new Social Credit party came into power with a large majority. At the next election Mr. Percy McKelvey was elected on the Independent ticket. Since that time this constituency has been represented by Social Crediters. The present member, Mr. Glen Johnston, is resident here.

... And what have we here?
A group of likely lads—also
of the year 1912. Dressed in
Sunday best with hard col-
lars, high boots, are Bruce
Patterson, Carl Beck, Elmer
Pendleton and Homer Far-
num.



G. B. Kirk and His Six-Ox Team



The famous six-ox team of Charlie Kirk (father of Guy Kirk, of Ponoka) regularly hauled ton loads from Ponoka to Mr. Kirk's store at Bismark. The beasts would pull their load through swamps that would mire a tractor. Their famous owner, cracking his 30-foot whip and yelling to his lead ox, could be heard 'upwards of three miles' on a still day.

About 1904 a fellow by the name of C. B. Kirk landed in Ponoka and settled with his family at Bismark, 16 miles west of town. He kept the post office and ran a general store.

He used his famous ox team to haul the goods he sold. At that time the road allowances were not opened and the travel was by trail—mainly old Indian trails. Culverts hadn't been heard of; often the teams would pull wagons through up to the hubs.

You could hear Charlie coming three miles away—long before he came in sight—cracking his 30-foot bull whip and shouting Wooo-Harr-Taaaylah!

Taylor was his lead ox and I asked him one day why he called him that. He said: "I got him off Naz Taylor—and the white face one on the pole I call Skinner, because I got him off Ed. Skinner."

Now Charlie sold just about most things at his store, that could be got at that time. Barbed wire was \$2.50 a spool; nails were \$2.50 a 100-lb. keg. When you asked for a thing he would say "how much—and what kind?" He never carried but one kind, except tobacco, and most times he'd be out. Then he'd say, "Sharrrr—that's too bad. I've got some on order—maybe it's at Ponoka now . . ."

But he always had evaporated apples. They came in wood barrels and when the barrel got down a little his pet cat would climb in to sleep. I think it hurt the sale some, if not the flavor.

One hot day in 1908 I needed flour and he had it—but in 100-lb. sacks. I wanted him to divide it into two fifties, but he said "Shucks, you're young and strong, you can get that home."

I did, but the cussed stuff got heavier every mile. I called it every name you'd think at, except flour. The last two miles there was no trail and I had to wind in and out amongst the trees. Then to make things worse I found I'd missed my shack, and gone half a mile too far. I was on Marcus Crandall's homestead. I really never forgave Charlie for that, even if he had got a share of the names I called that flour.

The picture of the team was taken by Bertram Davidson, who was the bartender at the Royal Hotel. It was pasted on the wall, so Mr. Kinvig had to take off the whole board—that was the kind of wallpaper used in those days, but most of us used the homesteader's bible (Eaton's catalogue).

Coming of the Pests

A commonly known, but presently little considered fact is that before the influx of settlers to Ponoka area, there were few pests to torment either man or beast.

Of the insect family there were, of course, mosquitoes and sand flies which plagued domestic animals to a degree, but it was not until after the importation of the first horses and cattle from the United States and Eastern Canada that bot flies and heel flies made their appearance. They were carried in, in the larva stage, and quickly multiplied, so that they soon became a problem.

The Tim Russell family settled in the Sharphead district in 1900, and son Lyle, who still farms an original Russell homestead recalls that there was no trouble with work oxen being bothered by heel flies until a few years later.

The Russell family acquired two yoke of oxen in that first year because the seasons just after the turn of the century were so wet a team of horses could hardly pull an empty wagon across a sod field without getting stuck, whereas a yoke of oxen could bull their way anyplace.

They kept and used these oxen until 1910, and Lyle tells an amusing story of his first experience with heel flies attacking the team. He was about ten years old at the time, and had the four bulls yoked to a disc working down a new patch of breaking. Things were going fine until suddenly all four threw their tails in the air and went at full gallop, which even so, was a rather lumbering gait, across the rough sod toward a pothole of water. Into this they plunged, disc and all, up to their bellies, and promptly lay down.

Lyle did his best with voice and goad to get them out, but, so he says, the cunning beasts never had, nor ever did, recognize him as their master, he being but a boy. And they, taking advantage of this state of affairs, always took their own sweet time and gait when he worked them. They refused to move and he had to go bawling with chagrin and rage to his dad and elder brothers for help. The men, upon arrival at the scene, soon routed them out and got them lined up for work again. From then on such mishaps were of common occurrence in heel fly season. Bot and nose flies tormented horses in the same degree.

Insect pests were not the only ones to move in with the settlers. Predatory animals such as coyotes, skunks and weasels had always been here, as had hawks and owls (if we consider the above animals and birds to be pests), but of the animal kingdom the flicker tail gopher, while a native of the prairie country south of Olds, did not appear here until around 1915. During the next ten years not much attention was paid to them, and they multiplied very rapidly, doing many thousands of dollars of damage to crops before a serious view of their depredations, and steps to control them were taken. The only good feature about them is that they provide good targets for small boys with twenty-two rifles, there being no closed season.

Various birds which moved in with settlement, including English sparrows, magpies and starlings have become real pests. The first English sparrows arrived almost immediately, the first magpies around 1920 and starlings did not appear until around 1945. These three species serve no useful purpose, thrive only where they are a nuisance, and without a doubt are here to stay.

The most serious, costly and altogether regrettable pest of all which came with settlement was weeds. Not a single noxious weed flourished in the district before the coming of the settlers but now, in fifty short years or less, we have with us almost every known species. Wild oats were here almost from the first and are still the most costly and troublesome weed we have to day. It would be hard to estimate the hundreds of thousands of dollars they have cost the farmers of the district, and it is possible they could have been kept out had their menace been recognized from the first. Ontario or pod mustard

also established itself early in some areas, due also to carelessness, and throughout the years has been a hard and costly weed to fight.

The writer well remembers when the first French or stink weed appeared around 1920. It was controlled for a time by hand picking, but soon got past that stage and ran rampant also until the introduction of modern chemical sprays. Other weeds such as ball, hares' ear and worm seed mustard, the Russian and common pigweed, nightflowering catchfly, smartweed, etc., never developed into such a menace as to be very troublesome, and they also are controllable by chemical, but the thistles, Canada and sow, which also first appeared around 1920 are resistant to chemical control, and have been and will continue to be menace of the first water, having spread over the whole district.

Other weeds now creeping in, nearly all of them within the last ten years, are toadflax, tartary, buckwheat, leafy spurge, hoary cress and hempnettle. These are all extremely noxious weeds, and will have to be carefully watched lest it become necessary, as has often been threatened, to give the country back to the Indians—with apology for the shape it is in

Conveniences

Conveniences were few. People couldn't leave home as quickly or go as far as they can nowadays. Therefore their amusements were localized and neighbors knew each other more intimately, theirs was a greater spirit of friendliness and people relied on each other and their own resources almost entirely.

Field work was done by small, and what we would consider primitive machines in their experimental stages. Many of the earliest settlers had brought horses with them from the States, but due to conditions which brought on swamp fever, most of these horses died, so the earliest land breaking was done by means of oxen or combinations of oxen and horses, or oxen, horses and cows. Some used mules alone or in combination with other beasts of burden to supply power. Among those known to have used oxen were Mr. Sisel and sons, Mr. Phil Palecheck, Mr. E. R. Mattern, Ase and Homer Lincoln, Alfred Osterland, Mr. James Dick and no doubt many others.

The first threshing was done by horse powered threshers, the bands were cut by hand and the straw removed with forks and man power.

The first saw-mills were run by horse and mule power.

The earliest roads followed the paths of least resistance right through every settler's yard and bridges, when absolutely necessary were crude pole affairs and where possible streams were forded.

There were between 30 and 40 gates to be opened between Usona and Ponoka and to speed up operations a child was almost a necessary convenience on a trip to town, inasmuch as size and strength permitted, he or she could open and close gates or if not strong enough for this duty, could at least hold the horses while the parent tended to the gates.

People have been known to walk to town for supplies when the need arose but as a rule when one neighbor drove to town he usually picked up groceries, mail, supplies, etc. for everyone along the way. Mr. Marcellus Black had a unique way of letting people know he was getting near their place. He usually sang at the top of his voice. In those, pre-radio days, it was a double treat to get one's supplies, accompanied by a musical serenade. Of course it served the purpose of getting people out to the road for their supplies as soon as Mr. Black arrived, thus saving time and effort on his part.

Printed by The Ponoka Herald Ltd.

A38815